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Edited by Michael Sadleir

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With Photographs of Barsetshire
by Charles S. Olcott

The LAST CHRONICLE of BARSET

Volume the Second

The Bishop's Palace, Salisbury

THE LAST CHRONICLE OF BARSET

By Anthony Trollope

Volume I Part II

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The illustrations are from photographs by Charles S. Olcott

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THE LAST CHRONICLE OF BARSET

CHAPTER XXIV

Mrs. Dobbs Broughton's Dinner-Party

MR. JOHN EAMES, of the Income-tax Office, had in these days risen so high in the world that people in the west-end of town, and very respectable people too,—people living in South Kensington, in neighbourhoods not far from Belgravia, and in very handsome houses round Bayswater,—were glad to ask him out to dinner. Money had been left to him by an earl, and rumour had of course magnified that money. He was a private secretary, which is in itself a great advance on being a mere clerk. And he had become the particularly intimate friend of an artist who had pushed himself into high fashion during the last year or two,—one Conway Dalrymple, whom the rich English world was beginning to pet and pelt with gilt sugar-plums, and who seemed to take very kindly to petting and gilt sugar-plums. I don't know whether the friendship of Conway Dalrymple had not done as much to secure John Eames his position at the Bayswater dinner-tables, as had either the private secretaryship, or the earl's money; and yet, when they had first known each other, now only two or three years ago, Conway Dalrymple had been the poorer man of the two. Some chance had brought them together, and they had lived in the same rooms for nearly two years. This arrangement had been broken up, and the Conway Dalrymple of these

days had a studio of his own, somewhere near Kensington Palace, where he painted portraits of young countesses, and in which he had even painted a young duchess. It was the peculiar merit of his pictures,—so at least said the art-loving world,—that though the likeness was always good, the stiffness of the modern portrait was never there. There was also ever some story told in Dalrymple's pictures over and above the story of the portraiture. This countess was drawn as a fairy with wings, that countess as a goddess with a helmet. The thing took for a time, and Conway Dalrymple was picking up his gilt sugar-plums with considerable rapidity.

On a certain day he and John Eames were to dine out together at a certain house in that Bayswater district. It was a large mansion, if not made of stone yet looking very stony, with thirty windows at least, all of them with cut-stone frames, requiring, let me say, at least four thousand a year for its maintenance. And its owner, Dobbs Broughton, a man very well known both in the City and over the grass in Northamptonshire, was supposed to have a good deal more than four thousand a year. Mrs. Dobbs Broughton, a very beautiful woman, who certainly was not yet thirty-five, let her worst enemies say what they might, had been painted by Conway Dalrymple as a Grace. There were, of course, three Graces in the picture, but each Grace was Mrs. Dobbs Broughton repeated. We all know how Graces stand sometimes; two Graces looking one way, and one the other. In this picture, Mrs. Dobbs Broughton as centre Grace looked you full in the face. The same lady looked away from you, displaying her left shoulder as one side Grace, and displaying her right shoulder as the other side Grace. For this pretty toy Mr. Conway Dalrymple had picked up a gilt sugar-plum to the tune of six hundred pounds, and had, moreover, won the heart both of Mr. and Mrs. Dobbs Broughton. "Upon my word, Johnny," Dalrymple had said to his friend, "he's a deuced good fellow, has really a good glass of claret,—

which is getting rarer and rarer every day,—and will mount you for a day, whenever you please, down at Market Harboro'. Come and dine with them." Johnny Eames condescended, and did go and dine with Mr. Dobbs Broughton. I wonder whether he remembered, when Conway Dalrymple was talking of the rarity of good claret, how much beer the young painter used to drink when they were out together in the country, as they used to be occasionally, three years ago; and how the painter had then been used to complain that bitter beer cost threepence a glass, instead of twopence, which had hitherto been the recognized price of the article. In those days the sugar-plums had not been gilt, and had been much rarer.

Johnny Eames and his friend went together to the house of Mr. Dobbs Broughton. As Dalrymple lived close to the Broughtons, Eames picked him up in a cab. "Filthy things, these cabs are," said Dalrymple, as he got into the Hansom.

"I don't know about that," said Johnny. "They're pretty good, I think."

"Foul things," said Conway. "Don't you feel what a draught comes in here because the glass is cracked. I'd have one of my own, only I should never know what to do with it."

"The greatest nuisance on earth, I should think," said Johnny.

"If you could always have it standing ready round the corner," said the artist, "it would be delightful. But one would want half a dozen horses, and two or three men for that."

"I think the stands are the best," said Johnny.

They were a little late,—a little later than they should have been had they considered that Eames was to be introduced to his new acquaintances. But he had already lived long enough before the world to be quite at his ease in such circumstances, and he entered Mrs. Broughton's drawing-room with his pleasantest smile upon his face. But as he entered he saw a sight which made him look

serious in spite of his efforts to the contrary. Mr. Adolphus Crosbie, secretary to the Board at the General Committee Office, was standing on the rug before the fire.

"Who will be there?" Eames had asked of his friend, when the suggestion to go and dine with Dobbs Broughton had been made to him.

"Impossible to say," Conway had replied. "A certain horrible fellow of the name of Musselboro, will almost certainly be there. He always is when they have anything of a swell dinner-party. He is a sort of partner of Broughton's in the city. He wears a lot of chains, and has elaborate whiskers, and an elaborate waistcoat, which is worse; and he doesn't wash his hands as often as he ought to do."

"An objectionable party, rather, I should say," said Eames.

"Well, yes; Musselboro is objectionable. He's very good-humoured you know, and good-looking in a sort of way, and goes everywhere; that is among people of this sort. Of course he's not hand-and-glove with Lord Derby; and I wish he could be made to wash his hands. They haven't any other standing dish, and you may meet anybody. They always have a Member of Parliament; they generally manage to catch a Baronet; and I have met a Peer there. On that august occasion Musselboro was absent."

So instructed, Eames, on entering the room, looked round at once for Mr. Musselboro. "If I don't see the whiskers and chain," he had said, "I shall know there's a Peer." Mr. Musselboro was in the room, but Eames had descried Mr. Crosbie long before he had seen Mr. Musselboro.

There was no reason for confusion on his part in meeting Crosbie. They had both loved Lily Dale. Crosbie might have been successful, but for his own fault. Eames had on one occasion been thrown into contact with him, and on that occasion had quarrelled with him and had beaten him, giving him a black eye, and in this way obtaining some mastery over him. There was no reason why he

should be ashamed of meeting Crosbie; and yet, when he saw him, the blood mounted all over his face, and he forgot to make any further search for Mr. Musselboro.

"I am so much obliged to Mr. Dalrymple for bringing you," said Mrs. Dobbs Broughton very sweetly, "only he ought to have come sooner. Naughty man! I know it was his fault. Will you take Miss Demolines down? Miss Demolines,—Mr. Eames."

Mr. Dobbs Broughton was somewhat sulky and had not welcomed our hero very cordially. He was beginning to think that Conway Dalrymple gave himself airs and did not sufficiently understand that a man who had horses at Market Harboro' and '41 Lafitte was at any rate as good as a painter who was pelted with gilt sugar-plums for painting countesses. But he was a man whose ill-humour never lasted long, and he was soon pressing his wine on Johnny Eames as though he loved him dearly.

But there was yet a few minutes before they went down to dinner, and Johnny Eames, as he endeavoured to find something to say to Miss Demolines,—which was difficult, as he did not in the least know Miss Demolines' line of conversation,—was aware that his efforts were impeded by thoughts of Mr. Crosbie. The man looked older than when he had last seen him,—so much older that Eames was astonished. He was bald, or becoming bald; and his whiskers were grey, or were becoming grey, and he was much fatter. Johnny Eames, who was always thinking of Lily Dale, could not now keep himself from thinking of Adolphus Crosbie. He saw at a glance that the man was in mourning, though there was nothing but his shirt-studs by which to tell it; and he knew that he was in mourning for his wife. "I wish she might have lived for ever," Johnny said to himself.

He had not yet been definitely called upon by the entrance of the servant to offer his arm to Miss Demolines, when Crosbie walked across to him from the rug and addressed him.

"Mr. Eames," said he, "it is some time since we met." And he offered his hand to Johnny.

"Yes, it is," said Johnny, accepting the proffered salutation. "I don't know exactly how long, but ever so long."

"I am very glad to have the opportunity of shaking hands with you," said Crosbie; and then he retired, as it had become his duty to wait with his arm ready for Mrs. Dobbs Broughton. Having married an earl's daughter he was selected for that honour. There was a barrister in the room, and Mrs. Dobbs Broughton ought to have known better. As she professed to be guided in such matters by the rules laid down by the recognized authorities, she ought to have been aware that a man takes no rank from his wife. But she was entitled I think to merciful consideration for her error. A woman situated as was Mrs. Dobbs Broughton cannot altogether ignore these terrible rules. She cannot let her guests draw lots for precedence. She must select some one for the honour of her own arm. And amidst the intricacies of rank how is it possible for a woman to learn and to remember everything? If Providence would only send Mrs. Dobbs Broughton a Peer for every dinner-party, the thing would go more easily; but what woman will tell me, off-hand, which should go out of a room first; a C.B., an Admiral of the Blue, the Dean of Barchester, or the Dean of Arches? Who is to know who was everybody's father? How am I to remember that young Thompson's progenitor was made a baronet and not a knight when he was Lord Mayor? Perhaps Mrs. Dobbs Broughton ought to have known that Mr. Crosbie could have gained nothing by his wife's rank, and the barrister may be considered to have been not immoderately severe when he simply spoke of her afterwards as the silliest and most ignorant old woman he had ever met in his life. Eames with the lovely Miss Demolines on his arm was the last to move before the hostess. Mr. Dobbs Broughton had led the way energetically with old Lady Demolines. There was no doubt about Lady Demolines,—

as his wife had told him, because her title marked her. Her husband had been a physician in Paris, and had been knighted in consequence of some benefit supposed to have been done to some French scion of royalty,—when such scions in France were royal and not imperial. Lady Demolines' rank was not much, certainly; but it served to mark her, and was beneficial.

As he went downstairs Eames was still thinking of his meeting with Crosbie, and had as yet hardly said a word to his neighbour, and his neighbour had not said a word to him. Now Johnny understood dinners quite well enough to know that in a party of twelve, among whom six are ladies, everything depends on your next neighbour, and generally on the next neighbour who specially belongs to you; and as he took his seat he was a little alarmed as to his prospect for the next two hours. On his other hand sat Mrs. Ponsonby, the barrister's wife, and he did not much like the look of Mrs. Ponsonby. She was fat, heavy, and good-looking; with a broad space between her eyes, and light smooth hair;—a youthful British matron every inch of her, of whom any barrister with a young family of children might be proud. Now Miss Demolines, though she was hardly to be called beautiful, was at any rate remarkable. She had large, dark, well-shaped eyes, and very dark hair, which she wore tangled about in an extraordinary manner, and she had an expressive face,—a face made expressive by the owner's will. Such power of expression is often attained by dint of labour,—though it never reaches to the expression of anything in particular. She was almost sufficiently good-looking to be justified in considering herself to be a beauty.

But Miss Demolines, though she had said nothing as yet, knew her game very well. A lady cannot begin conversation to any good purpose in the drawing-room, when she is seated and the man is standing;—nor can she know then how the table may subsequently arrange itself. Powder may be wasted, and often is wasted, and the spirit rebels

against the necessity of commencing a second enterprise. But Miss Demolines, when she found herself seated, and perceived that on the other side of her was Mr. Ponsonby, a married man, commenced her enterprise at once, and our friend John Eames was immediately aware that he would have no difficulty as to conversation.

"Don't you like winter dinner-parties?" began Miss Demolines. This was said just as Johnny was taking his seat, and he had time to declare that he liked dinner-parties at all periods of the year if the dinner was good and the people pleasant before the host had muttered something which was intended to be understood to be a grace. "But I mean especially in winter," continued Miss Demolines. "I don't think daylight should ever be admitted at a dinner-table; and though you may shut out the daylight, you can't shut out the heat. And then there are always so many other things to go to in May and June and July. Dinners should be stopped by Act of Parliament for those three months. I don't care what people do afterwards, because we always fly away on the first of August."

"That is good-natured on your part."

"I'm sure what I say would be for the good of society;—but at this time of the year a dinner is warm and comfortable."

"Very comfortable, I think."

"And people get to know each other;"—in saying which Miss Demolines looked very pleasantly up into Johnny's face.

"There is a great deal in that," said he. "I wonder whether you and I will get to know each other?"

"Of course we shall;—that is, if I'm worth knowing."

"There can be no doubt about that, I should say."

"Time alone can tell. But, Mr. Eames, I see that Mr. Crosbie is a friend of yours."

"Hardly a friend."

"I know very well that men are friends when they step up and shake hands with each other. It is the same as when women kiss."

"When I see women kiss, I always think that there is deep hatred at the bottom of it."

"And there may be deep hatred between you and Mr. Crosbie for anything I know to the contrary," said Miss Demolines.

"The very deepest," said Johnny, pretending to look grave.

"Ah; then I know he is your bosom friend, and that you will tell him anything I say. What a strange history that was of his marriage!"

"So I have heard;—but he is not quite bosom friend enough with me to have told me all the particulars. I know that his wife is dead."

"Dead; oh, yes; she has been dead these two years I should say."

"Not so long as that, I should think."

"Well,—perhaps not. But it's ever so long ago;—quite long enough for him to be married again. Did you know her?"

"I never saw her in my life."

"I knew her,—not well indeed; but I am intimate with her sister, Lady Amelia Gazebee, and I have met her there. None of that family have married what you may call well. And now, Mr. Eames, pray look at the menu and tell me what I am to eat. Arrange for me a little dinner of my own, out of the great bill of fare provided. I always expect some gentleman to do that for me. Mr. Crosbie, you know, only lived with his wife for one month."

"So I've been told."

"And a terrible month they had of it. I used to hear of it. He doesn't look that sort of man, does he?"

"Well;—no. I don't think he does. But what sort of man do you mean?"

"Why, such a regular Bluebeard! Of course you know how he treated another girl before he married Lady Alexandrina. She died of it,—with a broken heart; absolutely died; and there he is, indifferent as possible;—and would

treat me in the same way to-morrow if I would let him."

Johnny Eames, finding it impossible to talk to Miss Demolines about Lily Dale, took up the card of the dinner and went to work in earnest, recommending his neighbour what to eat and what to pass by. "But you've skipped the pâté," she said, with energy.

"Allow me to ask you to choose mine for me instead. You are much more fit to do it." And she did choose his dinner for him.

They were sitting at a round table, and in order that the ladies and gentlemen should alternate themselves properly, Mr. Musselboro was opposite to the host. Next to him on his right was old Mrs. Van Siever, the widow of a Dutch merchant, who was very rich. She was a ghastly thing to look at, as well from the quantity as from the nature of the wiggeries which she wore. She had not only a false front, but long false curls, as to which it cannot be conceived that she would suppose that any one would be ignorant as to their falseness. She was very thin, too, and very small, and putting aside her wiggeries, you would think her to be all eyes. She was a ghastly old woman to the sight, and not altogether pleasant in her mode of talking. She seemed to know Mr. Musselboro very well, for she called him by his name without any prefix. He had, indeed, begun life as a clerk in her husband's office.

"Why doesn't What's-his-name have real silver forks?" she said to him. Now Mrs. What's-his-name,—Mrs. Dobbs Broughton we will call her,—was sitting on the other side of Mr. Musselboro, between him and Mr. Crosbie; and, so placed, Mr. Musselboro found it rather hard to answer the question, more especially as he was probably aware that other questions would follow.

"What's the use?" said Mr. Musselboro. "Everybody has these plated things now. What's the use of a lot of capital lying dead?"

"Everybody doesn't. I don't. You know as well as I do, Musselboro, that the appearance of the thing goes for a

great deal. Capital isn't lying dead as long as people know that you've got it."

Before answering this Mr. Musselboro was driven to reflect that Mrs. Dobbs Broughton would probably hear his reply. "You won't find that there is any doubt on that head in the City as to Broughton," he said.

"I shan't ask in the City, and if I did, I should not believe what people told me. I think there are sillier folks in the City than anywhere else. What did he give for that picture upstairs which the young man painted?"

"What, Mrs. Dobbs Broughton's portrait?"

"You don't call that a portrait, do you? I mean the one with the three naked women?" Mr. Musselboro glanced round with one eye, and felt sure that Mrs. Dobbs Broughton had heard the question. But the old woman was determined to have an answer. "How much did he give for it, Musselboro?"

"Six hundred pounds, I believe," said Mr. Musselboro, looking straight before him as he answered, and pretending to treat the subject with perfect indifference.

"Did he indeed, now? Six hundred pounds! And yet he hasn't got silver spoons. How things are changed! Tell me, Musselboro, who was that young man who came in with the painter?"

Mr. Musselboro turned round and asked Mrs. Broughton. "A Mr. John Eames, Mrs. Van Siever," said Mrs. Broughton, whispering across the front of Mr. Musselboro. "He is private secretary to Lord—Lord—Lord—I forget who. Some one of the Ministers, I know. And he had a great fortune left him the other day by Lord—Lord —Lord somebody else."

"All among the lords, I see," said Mrs. Van Siever. Then Mrs. Dobbs Broughton drew herself back, remembering some little attack which had been made on her by Mrs. Van Siever when she herself had had the real lord to dine with her.

There was a Miss Van Siever there also, sitting between

Crosbie and Conway Dalrymple. Conway Dalrymple had been specially brought there to sit next to Miss Van Siever. "There's no knowing how much she'll have," said Mrs. Dobbs Broughton, in the warmth of her friendship. "But it's all real. It is, indeed. The mother is awfully rich."

"But she is awful in another way, too," said Dalrymple.

"Indeed she is, Conway." Mrs. Dobbs Broughton had got into a way of calling her young friend by his Christian name. "All the world calls him Conway," she had said to her husband once when her husband caught her doing so. "She is awful. Her husband made the business in the City, when things were very different from what they are now, and I can't help having her. She has transactions of business with Dobbs. But there's no mistake about the money."

"She needn't leave it to her daughter, I suppose?"

"But why shouldn't she? She has nobody else. You might offer to paint her, you know. She'd make an excellent picture. So much character. You come and see her."

Conway Dalrymple had expressed his willingness to meet Miss Van Siever, saying something, however, as to his present position being one which did not admit of any matrimonial speculation. Then Mrs. Dobbs Broughton had told him, with much seriousness, that he was altogether wrong, and that were he to forget himself, or commit himself, or misbehave himself, there must be an end to their pleasant intimacy. In answer to which, Mr. Dalrymple had said that his Grace was surely of all Graces the least gracious. And now he had come to meet Miss Van Siever, and was seated next to her at table.

Miss Van Siever, who at this time had perhaps reached her twenty-fifth year, was certainly a handsome young woman. She was fair and large, bearing no likeness whatever to her mother. Her features were regular, and her full, clear eyes had a brilliance of their own, looking at you always stedfastly and boldly, though very seldom pleasantly. Her mouth would have been beautiful had it not been too

strong for feminine beauty. Her teeth were perfect,—too perfect,—looking like miniature walls of carved ivory. She knew the fault of this perfection, and shewed her teeth as little as she could. Her nose and chin were finely chiselled, and her head stood well upon her shoulders. But there was something hard about it all which repelled you. Dalrymple, when he saw her, recoiled from her, not outwardly, but inwardly. Yes, she was handsome, as may be a horse or a tiger; but there was about her nothing of feminine softness. He could not bring himself to think of taking Clara Van Siever as the model that was to sit before him for the rest of his life. He certainly could make a picture of her, as had been suggested by his friend, Mrs. Broughton, but it must be as Judith with the dissevered head, or as Jael using her hammer over the temple of Sisera. Yes,—he thought she would do as Jael; and if Mrs. Van Siever would throw him a sugar-plum,—for he would want the sugar-plum, seeing that any other result was out of the question,—the thing might be done. Such was the idea of Mr. Conway Dalrymple respecting Miss Van Siever,—before he led her down to dinner.

At first he found it hard to talk to her. She answered him, and not with monosyllables. But she answered him without sympathy, or apparent pleasure in talking. Now the young artist was in the habit of being flattered by ladies, and expected to have his small talk made very easy for him. He liked to give himself little airs, and was not generally disposed to labour very hard at the task of making himself agreeable.

"Were you ever painted yet?" he asked her after they had both been sitting silent for two or three minutes.

"Was I ever—ever painted? In what way?"

"I don't mean rouged, or enamelled, or got up by Madame Rachel; but have you ever had your portrait taken?"

"I have been photographed,—of course."

"That's why I asked you if you had been painted,—so

as to make some little distinction between the two. I am a painter by profession, and do portraits."

"So Mrs. Broughton told me."

"I am not asking for a job, you know."

"I am quite sure of that."

"But I should have thought you would have been sure to have sat to somebody."

"I never did. I never thought of doing so. One does those things at the instigation of one's intimate friends,—fathers, mothers, uncles, and aunts, and the like."

"Or husbands, perhaps,—or lovers?"

"Well, yes; my intimate friend is my mother, and she would never dream of such a thing. She hates pictures."

"Hates pictures!"

"And especially portraits. And I'm afraid, Mr. Dalrymple, she hates artists."

"Good heavens; how cruel! I suppose there is some story attached to it. There has been some fatal likeness,—some terrible picture,—something in her early days?"

"Nothing of the kind, Mr. Dalrymple. It is merely the fact that her sympathies are with ugly things, rather than with pretty things. I think she loves the mahogany dinner-table better than anything else in the house; and she likes to have everything dark, and plain, and solid."

"And good?"

"Good of its kind, certainly."

"If everybody was like your mother, how would the artists live?"

"There would be none."

"And the world, you think, would be none the poorer?"

"I did not speak of myself. I think the world would be very much the poorer. I am very fond of the ancient masters, though I do not suppose that I understand them."

"They are easier understood than the modern, I can tell you. Perhaps you don't care for modern pictures?"

"Not in comparison, certainly. If that is uncivil, you have brought it on yourself. But I do not in truth mean

anything derogatory to the painters of the day. When their pictures are old, they,—that is the good ones among them,—will be nice also."

"Pictures are like wine, and want age, you think?"

"Yes, and statues too, and buildings above all things. The colours of new paintings are so glaring, and the faces are so bright and self-conscious, that they look to me when I go to the exhibition like coloured prints in a child's new picture-book. It is the same thing with buildings. One sees all the points, and nothing is left to the imagination."

"I find I have come across a real critic."

"I hope, at any rate, I am not a sham one;" and Miss Van Siever as she said this looked very savage.

"I shouldn't take you to be a sham in anything."

"Ah, that would be saying a great deal for myself. Who can undertake to say that he is not a sham in anything?"

As she said this the ladies were getting up. So Miss Van Siever also got up, and left Mr. Conway Dalrymple to consider whether he could say or could think of himself that he was not a sham in anything. As regarded Miss Clara Van Siever, he began to think that he should not object to paint her portrait, even though there might be no sugar-plum. He would certainly do it as Jael; and he would, if he dared, insert dimly in the background some idea of the face of the mother, half-appearing, half-vanishing, as the spirit of the sacrifice. He was composing his picture, while Mr. Dobbs Broughton was arranging himself and his bottles.

"Musselboro," he said, "I'll come up between you and Crosbie. Mr. Eames, though I run away from you, the claret shall remain; or, rather, it shall flow backwards and forwards as rapidly as you will."

"I'll keep it moving," said Johnny.

"Do; there's a good fellow. It's a nice glass of wine, isn't it? Old Ramsby, who keeps as good a stock of stuff as any wine-merchant in London, gave me a hint, three or four years ago, that he'd a lot of tidy Bordeaux. It's '41, you know. He had ninety dozen, and I took it all."

"What was the figure, Broughton?" said Crosbie, asking the question which he knew was expected.

"Well, I only gave one hundred and four for it then; it's worth a hundred and twenty now. I wouldn't sell a bottle of it for any money. Come, Dalrymple, pass it round; but fill your glass first."

"Thank you, no; I don't like it. I'll drink sherry."

"Don't like it!" said Dobbs Broughton.

"It's strange, isn't it? but I don't."

"I thought you particularly told me to drink his claret?" said Johnny to his friend afterwards.

"So I did," said Conway; "and wonderfully good wine it is. But I make it a rule never to eat or drink anything in a man's house when he praises it himself and tells me the price of it."

"And I make it a rule never to cut the nose off my own face," said Johnny.

Before they went, Johnny Eames had been specially invited to call on Lady Demolines, and had said that he would do so. "We live in Porchester Gardens," said Miss Demolines. "Upon my word, I believe that the farther London stretches in that direction, the farther mamma will go. She thinks the air so much better. I know it's a long way."

"Distance is nothing to me," said Johnny; "I can always set off over night."

Conway Dalrymple did not get invited to call on Mrs. Van Siever, but before he left the house he did say a word or two more to his friend Mrs. Broughton as to Clara Van Siever. "She is a fine young woman," he said; "she is indeed."

"You have found it out, have you?"

"Yes, I have found it out. I do not doubt that some day she'll murder her husband or her mother, or startle the world by some newly-invented crime; but that only makes her the more interesting."

"And when you add to that all the old woman's money,"

said Mrs. Dobbs Broughton, "you think that she might do?"

"For a picture, certainly. I'm speaking of her simply as a model. Could we not manage it? Get her once here, without her mother knowing it, or Broughton, or any one. I've got the subject,—Jael and Sisera, you know. I should like to put Musselboro in as Sisera, with the nail half driven in." Mrs. Dobbs Broughton declared that the scheme was a great deal too wicked for her participation, but at last she promised to think of it.

"You might as well come up and have a cigar," Dalrymple said, as he and his friend left Mr. Broughton's house. Johnny said that he would go up and have a cigar or two. "And now tell me what you think of Mrs. Dobbs Broughton and her set," said Conway.

"Well; I'll tell you what I think of them. I think they stink of money, as the people say; but I'm not sure that they've got any all the same."

"I should suppose he makes a large income."

"Very likely, and perhaps spends more than he makes. A good deal of it looked to me like make-believe. There's no doubt about the claret, but the champagne was execrable. A man is a criminal to have such stuff handed round to his guests. And there isn't the ring of real gold about the house."

"I hate the ring of gold, as you call it," said the artist.

"So do I,—I hate it like poison; but if it is there, I like it to be true. There is a sort of persons going now,—and one meets them out here and there every day of one's life,—who are downright Brummagem to the ear and to the touch and to the sight, and we recognize them as such at the very first moment. My honoured lord and master, Sir Raffle, is one such. There is no mistaking him. Clap him down upon the counter, and he rings dull and untrue at once. Pardon me, my dear Conway, if I say the same of your excellent friend Mr. Dobbs Broughton."

"I think you go a little too far, but I don't deny it. What you mean is, that he's not a gentleman."

"I mean a great deal more than that. Bless you, when you come to talk of a gentleman, who is to define the word? How do I know whether or no I'm a gentleman myself. When I used to be in Burton Crescent, I was hardly a gentleman then,—sitting at the same table with Mrs. Roper and the Lupexes;—do you remember them, and the lovely Amelia?"

"I suppose you were a gentleman, then, as well as now."

"You, if you had been painting duchesses then, with a studio in Kensington Gardens, would not have said so, if you had happened to come across me. I can't define a gentleman, even in my own mind;—but I can define the sort of man with whom I think I can live pleasantly."

"And poor Dobbs doesn't come within the line?"

"N—o, not quite; a very nice fellow, I'm quite sure, and I'm very much obliged to you for taking me there."

"I never will take you to any houses again. And what did you think of his wife?"

"That's a horse of another colour altogether. A pretty woman with such a figure as hers has got a right to be anything she pleases. I see you are a great favourite."

"No, I'm not;—not especially. I do like her. She wants to make up a match between me and that Miss Van Siever. Miss Van is to have gold by the ingot, and jewels by the bushel, and a hatful of bank shares, and a whole mine in Cornwall, for her fortune."

"And is very handsome into the bargain."

"Yes; she's handsome."

"So is her mother," said Johnny. "If you take the daughter, I'll take the mother, and see if I can't do you out of a mine or two. Good-night, old fellow. I'm only joking about old Dobbs. I'll go and dine there again to-morrow, if you like it."

CHAPTER XXV

Miss Madalina Demolines

"I DON'T think you care two straws about her," Conway Dalrymple said to his friend John Eames, two days after the dinner-party at Mrs. Dobbs Broughton's. The painter was at work in his studio, and the private secretary from the Income-tax Office, who was no doubt engaged on some special mission to the West End on the part of Sir Raffle Buffle, was sitting in a lounging-chair and smoking a cigar.

"Because I don't go about with my stockings cross-gartered, and do that kind of business?"

"Well, yes; because you don't do that kind of business, more or less."

"It isn't in my line, my dear fellow. I know what you mean, very well. I daresay, artistically speaking,—"

"Don't be an ass, Johnny."

"Well then, poetically, or romantically, if you like that better,—I daresay that poetically or romantically I am deficient. I eat my dinner very well, and I don't suppose I ought to do that; and, if you'll believe me, I find myself laughing sometimes."

"I never knew a man who laughed so much. You're always laughing."

"And that, you think, is a bad sign?"

"I don't believe you really care about her. I think you are aware that you have got a love-affair on hand, and that you hang on to it rather persistently, having in some way come to a resolution that you would be persistent. But there isn't much heart in it. I daresay there was once."

"And that is your opinion?"

"You are just like some of those men who for years past have been going to write a book on some new subject. The intention has been sincere at first, and it never alto-

gether dies away. But the would-be author, though he still talks of his work, knows that it will never be executed, and is very patient under the disappointment. All enthusiasm about the thing is gone, but he is still known as the man who is going to do it some day. You are the man who means to marry Miss Dale in five, ten, or twenty years' time."

"Now, Conway, all that is thoroughly unfair. The would-be author talks of his would-be book to everybody. I have never talked of Miss Dale to any one but you, and one or two very old family friends. And from year to year, and from month to month, I have done all that has been in my power to win her. I don't think I shall ever succeed, and yet I am as determined about it as I was when I first began it,—or rather much more so. If I do not marry Lily, I shall never marry at all, and if anybody were to tell me to-morrow that she had made up her mind to have me, I should well nigh go mad for joy. But I am not going to give up all my life for love. Indeed the less I can bring myself to give up for it, the better I shall think of myself. Now I'll go away and call on old lady Demolines."

"And flirt with her daughter."

"Yes;—flirt with her daughter, if I get the opportunity. Why shouldn't I flirt with her daughter?"

"Why not, if you like it?"

"I don't like it,—not particularly, that is; because the young lady is not very pretty, nor yet very graceful, nor yet very wise."

"She is pretty after a fashion," said the artist, "and if not wise, she is at any rate clever."

"Nevertheless, I do not like her," said John Eames.

"Then why do you go there?"

"One has to be civil to people though they are neither pretty nor wise. I don't mean to insinuate that Miss Demolines is particularly bad, or indeed that she is worse than young ladies in general. I only abused her because there was an insinuation in what you said, that I was going

to amuse myself with Miss Demolines in the absence of Miss Dale. The one thing has nothing to do with the other thing. Nothing that I shall say to Miss Demolines will at all militate against my loyalty to Lily."

"All right, old fellow;—I didn't mean to put you on your purgation. I want you to look at that sketch. Do you know for whom it is intended?" Johnny took up a scrap of paper, and having scrutinized it for a minute or two declared that he had not the slightest idea who was represented. "You know the subject,—the story that is intended to be told?" said Dalrymple.

"Upon my word I don't. There's some old fellow seems to be catching it over the head; but it's all so confused I can't make much of it. The woman seems to be uncommon angry."

"Do you ever read your Bible?"

"Ah, dear! not as often as I ought to do. Ah, I see; it's Sisera. I never could quite believe that story. Jael might have killed Captain Sisera in his sleep,—for which, by-the-by, she ought to have been hung, and she might possibly have done it with a hammer and a nail. But she could not have driven it through, and staked him to the ground."

"I've warrant enough for putting it into a picture, at any rate. My Jael there is intended for Miss Van Siever."

"Miss Van Siever! Well, it is like her. Has she sat for it?"

"O dear, no; not yet. I mean to get her to do so. There's a strength about her, which would make her sit the part admirably. And I fancy she would like to be driving a nail into a fellow's head. I think I shall take Musselboro for a Sisera."

"You're not in earnest?"

"He would just do for it. But of course I shan't ask him to sit, as my Jael would not like it. She would not consent to operate on so base a subject. So you really are going down to Guestwick?"

"Yes; I start to-morrow. Good-by, old fellow. I'll come

and sit for Sisera if you'll let me;—only Miss Van Jael shall have a blunted nail, if you please."

Then Johnny left the artist's room and walked across from Kensington to Lady Demolines' house. As he went he partly accused himself, and partly excused himself in that matter of his love for Lily Dale. There were moments of his life in which he felt that he would willingly die for her,—that life was not worth having without her,—in which he went about inwardly reproaching fortune for having treated him so cruelly. Why should she not be his? He half believed that she loved him. She had almost told him so. She could not surely still love that other man who had treated her with such vile falsehood? As he considered the question in all its bearings he assured himself over and over again that there would be now no fear of that rival;—and yet he had such fears, and hated Crosbie almost as much as ever. It was a thousand pities, certainly, that the man should have been made free by the death of his wife. But it could hardly be that he should seek Lily again, or that Lily, if so sought, should even listen to him. But yet there he was, free once more,—an odious being, whom Johnny was determined to sacrifice to his vengeance, if cause for such sacrifice should occur. And thus thinking of the real truth of his love, he endeavoured to excuse himself to himself from that charge of vagueness and laxness which his friend Conway Dalrymple had brought against him. And then again he accused himself of the same sin. If he had been positively in earnest, with downright manly earnestness, would he have allowed the thing to drag itself on with a weak uncertain life, as it had done for the last two or three years? Lily Dale had been a dream to him in his boyhood; and he had made a reality of his dream as soon as he had become a man. But before he had been able, as a man, to tell his love to the girl whom he had loved as a child, another man had intervened, and his prize had been taken from him. Then the wretched victor had thrown his treasure away, and he, John Eames, had

been content to stoop to pick it up,—was content to do so now. But there was something which he felt to be unmanly in the constant stooping. Dalrymple had told him that he was like a man who is ever writing a book and yet never writes it. He would make another attempt to get his book written,—an attempt into which he would throw all his strength and all his heart. He would do his very best to make Lily his own. But if he failed now, he would have done with it. It seemed to him to be below his dignity as a man to be always coveting a thing which he could not obtain.

Johnny was informed by the boy in buttons, who opened the door for him at Lady Demolines', that the ladies were at home, and he was shown up into the drawing-room. Here he was allowed full ten minutes to explore the knicknacks on the table, and open the photograph book, and examine the furniture, before Miss Demolines made her appearance. When she did come, her hair was tangled more marvellously even than when he saw her at the dinner-party, and her eyes were darker, and her cheeks thinner. "I'm afraid mamma won't be able to come down," said Miss Demolines. "She will be so sorry; but she is not quite well to-day. The wind is in the east, she says, and when she says the wind is in the east she always refuses to be well."

"Then I should tell her it was in the west."

"But it is in the east."

"Ah, there I can't help you, Miss Demolines. I never know which is east, and which west; and if I did, I shouldn't know from which point the wind blew."

"At any rate mamma can't come downstairs, and you must excuse her. What a very nice woman Mrs. Dobbs Broughton is." Johnny acknowledged that Mrs. Dobbs Broughton was charming. "And Mr. Broughton is so good-natured!" Johnny again assented. "I like him of all things," said Miss Demolines. "So do I," said Johnny;—"I never liked anybody so much in my life. I suppose one is

bound to say that kind of thing." "Oh, you ill-natured man," said Miss Demolines. "I suppose you think that poor Mr. Broughton is a little—just a little,—you know what I mean."

"Not exactly," said Johnny.

"Yes, you do; you know very well what I mean. And of course he is. How can he help it?"

"Poor fellow,—no. I don't suppose he can help it, or he would;—wouldn't he?"

"Of course Mr. Broughton had not the advantage of birth or much early education. All his friends know that, and make allowance accordingly. When she married him, she was aware of his deficiency, and made up her mind to put up with it."

"It was very kind of her; don't you think so?"

"I knew Maria Clutterbuck for years before she was married. Of course she was very much my senior, but, nevertheless, we were friends. I think I was hardly more than twelve years old when I first began to correspond with Maria. She was then past twenty. So you see, Mr. Eames, I make no secret of my age."

"Why should you?"

"But never mind that. Everybody knows that Maria Clutterbuck was very much admired. Of course I'm not going to tell you or any other gentleman all her history."

"I was in hopes you were."

"Then certainly your hopes will be frustrated, Mr. Eames. But undoubtedly when she told us that she was going to take Dobbs Broughton, we were a little disappointed. Maria Clutterbuck had been used to a better kind of life. You understand what I mean, Mr. Eames?"

"Oh, exactly;—and yet it's not a bad kind of life, either."

"No, no; that is true. It has its attractions. She keeps her carriage, sees a good deal of company, has an excellent house, and goes abroad for six weeks every year. But you know, Mr. Eames, there is, perhaps, a little uncertainty about it."

"Life is always uncertain, Miss Demolines."

"You're quizzing now, I know. But don't you feel now, really, that City money is always very chancy? It comes and goes so quick."

"As regards the going, I think that's the same with all money," said Johnny.

"Not with land, or the funds. Mamma has every shilling laid out in a first-class mortgage on land at four per cent. That does make one feel so secure! The land can't run away."

"But you think poor Broughton's money may?"

"It's all speculation, you know. I don't believe she minds it; I don't, indeed. She lives that kind of fevered life now that she likes excitement. Of course we all know that Mr. Dobbs Broughton is not what we can call an educated gentleman. His manners are against him, and he is very ignorant. Even dear Maria would admit that."

"One would perhaps let that pass without asking her opinion at all."

"She has acknowledged it to me, twenty times. But he is very good-natured, and lets her do pretty nearly anything that she likes. I only hope she won't trespass on his good-nature. I do, indeed."

"You mean, spend too much money?"

"No; I didn't mean that exactly. Of course she ought to be moderate, and I hope she is. To that kind of fevered existence profuse expenditure is perhaps necessary. But I was thinking of something else. I fear she is a little giddy."

"Dear me! I should have thought she was too—too—too—"

"You mean too old for anything of that kind. Maria Broughton must be thirty-three if she's a day."

"That would make you just twenty-five," said Johnny, feeling perfectly sure as he said so that the lady whom he was addressing was at any rate past thirty!

"Never mind my age, Mr. Eames; whether I am twenty-five, or a hundred-and-five, has nothing to do with poor

Maria Clutterbuck. But now I'll tell you why I mention all this to you. You must have seen how foolish she is about your friend Mr. Dalrymple?"

"Upon my word, I haven't."

"Nonsense, Mr. Eames; you have. If she were your wife, would you like her to call a man Conway? Of course you would not. I don't mean to say that there's anything in it. I know Maria's principles too well to suspect that. It's merely because she's flighty and fevered."

"That fevered existence accounts for it all," said Johnny.

"No doubt it does," said Miss Demolines, with a nod of her head, which was intended to show that she was willing to give her friend the full benefit of any excuse which could be offered for her. "But don't you think you could do something, Mr. Eames."

"I do something?"

"Yes, you. You and Mr. Dalrymple are such friends! If you were just to point out to him you know——"

"Point out what? Tell him that he oughtn't to be called Conway. Because, after all, I suppose that's the worst of it. If you mean to say that Dalrymple is in love with Mrs. Broughton, you never made a greater mistake in your life."

"Oh, no; not in love. That would be terrible, you know." And Miss Demolines shook her head sadly. "But there may be so much mischief done without anything of that kind! Thoughtlessness, you know, Mr. Eames,—pure thoughtlessness! Think of what I have said, and if you can speak a word to your friend, do. And now I want to ask you something else. I'm so glad you are come, because circumstances have seemed to make it necessary that you and I should know each other. We may be of so much use if we put our heads together." Johnny bowed when he heard this, but made no immediate reply. "Have you heard anything about a certain picture that is being planned?" Johnny did not wish to answer this question, but Miss

Demolines paused so long, and looked so earnestly into his face, that he found himself forced to say something.

"What picture?"

"A certain picture that is,—or, perhaps, that is not to be, painted by Mr. Dalrymple?"

"I hear so much about Dalrymple's pictures! You don't mean the portrait of Lady Glencorn Palliser? That is nearly finished, and will be in the Exhibition this year."

"I don't mean that at all. I mean a picture that has not yet been begun."

"A portrait, I suppose?"

"As to that I cannot quite say. It is at any rate to be a likeness. I am sure you have heard of it. Come, Mr. Eames; it would be better that we should be candid with each other. You remember Miss Van Siever, of course?"

"I remember that she dined at the Broughton's."

"And you have heard of Jael, I suppose, and Sisera?"

"Yes; in a general way,—in the Bible."

"And now will you tell me whether you have not heard the names of Jael and Miss Van Siever coupled together? I see you know all about it."

"I have heard of it, certainly."

"Of course you have. So have I, as you perceive. Now, Mr. Eames,"—and Miss Demolines' voice became tremulously eager as she addressed him,—"it is your duty, and it is my duty, to take care that that picture shall never be painted."

"But why should it not be painted?"

"You don't know Miss Van Siever, yet."

"Not in the least."

"Nor Mrs. Van Siever."

"I never spoke a word to her."

"I do. I know them both,—well." There was something almost grandly tragic in Miss Demolines' voice as she thus spoke. "Yes, Mr. Eames, I know them well. If that scheme be continued, it will work terrible mischief. You and I must prevent it."

"But I don't see what harm it will do."

"Think of Conway Dalrymple passing so many hours in Maria's sitting-room upstairs! The picture is to be painted there, you know."

"But Miss Van Siever will be present. Won't that make it all right? What is there wrong about Miss Van Siever?"

"I won't deny that Clara Van Siever has a certain beauty of her own. To me she is certainly the most unattractive woman that I ever came near. She is simply repulsive!" Hereupon Miss Demolines held up her hand as though she were banishing Miss Van Siever for ever from her sight, and shuddered slightly. "Men think her handsome, and she is handsome. But she is false, covetous, malicious, cruel, and dishonest."

"What a fiend in petticoats!"

"You may say that, Mr. Eames. And then her mother! Her mother is not so bad. Her mother is very different. But the mother is an odious woman, too. It was an evil day for Maria Clutterbuck when she first saw either the mother or the daughter. I tell you that in confidence."

"But what can I do?" said Johnny, who began to be startled and almost interested by the eagerness of the woman.

"I'll tell you what you can do. Don't let your friend go to Mr. Broughton's house to paint the picture. If he does do it, there will mischief come of it. Of course you can prevent him."

"I should not think of trying to prevent him unless I knew why."

"She's a nasty proud minx, and it would set her up ever so high,—to think that she was being painted by Mr. Dalrymple! But that isn't the reason. Maria would get into terrible trouble about it, and there would be no end of mischief. I must not tell you more now, and if you do not believe me, I cannot help it. Surely, Mr. Eames, my word may be taken as going for something? And when I ask you

to help me in this, I do expect that you will not refuse me." By this time Miss Demolines was sitting close to him, and had more than once put her hand upon his arm in the energy of her eloquence. Then as he remembered that he had never seen Miss Demolines till the other day, or Miss Van Siever, or even Mrs. Dobbs Broughton, he bethought himself that it was all very droll. Nevertheless he had no objection to Miss Demolines putting her hand upon his arm.

"I never like to interfere in anything that does not seem to be my own business," said Johnny.

"Is not your friend's business your own business? What does friendship mean if it is not so? And when I tell you that it is my business, mine of right, does that go for nothing with you? I thought I might depend upon you, Mr. Eames; I did indeed." Then again she put her hand upon his arm, and as he looked into her eyes he began to think that after all she was good-looking in a certain way. At any rate she had fine eyes, and there was something picturesque about the entanglement of her hair. "Think of it, and then come back and talk to me again," said Miss Demolines.

"But I am going out of town to-morrow."

"For how long?"

"For ten days."

"Nothing can be done during that time. Clara Van Siever is going away in a day, and will not be back for three weeks. I happen to know that; so we have plenty of time for working. It would be very desirable that she should never even hear of it; but that cannot be hoped, as Maria has such a tongue! Couldn't you see Mr. Dalrymple to-night?"

"Well, no; I don't think I could."

"Mind, at least, that you come to me as soon as ever you return."

Before he got out of the house, which he did after a most affectionate farewell, Johnny felt himself compelled

to promise that he would come to Miss Demolines again as soon as he got back to town; and as the door was closed behind him by the boy in buttons, he made up his mind that he certainly would call as soon as he returned to London. "It's as good as a play," he said to himself. Not that he cared in the least for Miss Demolines, or that he would take any steps with the intention of preventing the painting of the picture. Miss Demolines had some battle to fight, and he would leave her to fight it with her own weapons. If his friend chose to paint a picture of Jael, and take Miss Van Siever as a model, it was no business of his. Nevertheless he would certainly go and see Miss Demolines again, because, as he said, she was as good as a play.

CHAPTER XXVI

The Picture

ON that same afternoon Conway Dalrymple rolled up his sketch of Jael and Sisera, put it into his pocket, dressed himself with some considerable care, putting on a velvet coat which he was in the habit of wearing out of doors when he did not intend to wander beyond Kensington Gardens and the neighbourhood and which was supposed to become him well, yellow gloves, and a certain Spanish hat of which he was fond, and slowly sauntered across to the house of his friend Mrs. Dobbs Broughton. When the door was opened to him he did not ask if the lady were at home, but muttering some word to the servant, made his way through the hall, upstairs, to a certain small sitting-room looking to the north, which was much used by the mistress of the house. It was quite clear that Conway Dalrymple had arranged his visit beforehand, and that he was expected. He opened the door without knocking, and, though the servant had followed him, he entered

without being announced. "I'm afraid I'm late," he said, as he gave his hand to Mrs. Broughton; "but for the life I could not get away sooner."

"You are quite in time," said the lady, "for any good that you are likely to do."

"What does that mean?"

"It means this, my friend, that you had better give the idea up. I have been thinking of it all day, and I do not approve of it."

"What nonsense!"

"Of course you will say so, Conway. I have observed of late that whatever I say to you is called nonsense. I suppose it is the new fashion that gentlemen should so express themselves, but I am not quite sure that I like it."

"You know what I mean. I am very anxious about this picture, and I shall be much disappointed if it cannot be done now. It was you put it into my head first."

"I regret it very much, I can assure you; but it will not be generous in you to urge that against me."

"But why shouldn't it succeed?"

"There are many reasons,—some personal to myself."

"I do not know what they can be. You hinted at something which I only took as having been said in joke."

"If you mean about Miss Van Siever and yourself, I was quite in earnest, Conway. I do not think you could do better, and I should be glad to see it of all things. Nothing would please me more than to bring Miss Van Siever and you together."

"And nothing would please me less."

"But why so?"

"Because,—because——. I can do nothing but tell you the truth, carina; because my heart is not free to present itself at Miss Van Siever's feet."

"It ought to be free, Conway, and you must make it free. It will be well that you should be married, and well for others besides yourself. I tell you so as your friend, and you have no truer friend. Sit where you are, if you please. You

can say anything you have to say without stalking about the room."

"I was not going to stalk,—as you call it."

"You will be safer and quieter while you are sitting. I heard a knock at the door, and I do not doubt that it is Clara. She said she would be here."

"And you have told her of the picture?"

"Yes; I have told her. She said that it would be impossible, and that her mother would not allow it. Here she is." Then Miss Van Siever was shown into the room, and Dalrymple perceived that she was a girl the peculiarity of whose complexion bore daylight better even than candle-light. There was something in her countenance which seemed to declare that she could bear any light to which it might be subjected without flinching from it. And her bonnet, which was very plain, and her simple brown morning gown, suited her well. She was one who required none of the circumstances of studied dress to carry off aught in her own appearance. She could look her best when other women look their worst, and could dare to be seen at all times. Dalrymple, with an artist's eye, saw this at once, and immediately confessed to himself that there was something great about her. He could not deny her beauty. But there was ever present to him that look of hardness which had struck him when he first saw her. He could not but fancy that though at times she might be playful, and allow the fur of her coat to be stroked with good-humour,—she would be a dangerous plaything, using her claws unpleasantly when the good-humour should have passed away. But not the less was she beautiful, and—beyond that and better than that, for his purpose,—she was picturesque.

"Clara," said Mrs. Broughton, "here is this mad painter, and he says that he will have you on his canvas, either with your will or without it."

"Even if he could do that, I am sure he would not," said Miss Van Siever.

"To prove to you that I can, I think I need only show

you the sketch," said Dalrymple, taking the drawing out of his pocket. "As regards the face, I know it so well by heart already, that I feel certain I could produce a likeness without even a sitting. What do you think of it, Mrs. Broughton?"

"It is clever," said she, looking at it with all that enthusiasm which women are able to throw into their eyes on such occasions; "very clever. The subject would just suit her. I have never doubted that."

"Eames says that it is confused," said the artist.

"I don't see that at all," said Mrs. Broughton.

"Of course a sketch must be rough. This one has been rubbed about and altered,—but I think there is something in it."

"An immense deal," said Mrs. Broughton. "Don't you think so, Clara?"

"I am not a judge."

"But you can see the woman's fixed purpose; and her stealthiness as well;—and the man sleeps like a log. What is that dim outline?"

"Nothing in particular," said Dalrymple. But the dim outline was intended to represent Mrs. Van Siever.

"It is very good,—unquestionably good," said Mrs. Dobbs Broughton. "I do not for a moment doubt that you would make a great picture of it. It is just the subject for you, Conway; so much imagination, and yet such a scope for portraiture. It would be full of action, and yet such perfect repose. And the lights and shadows would be exactly in your line. I can see at a glance how you would manage the light in the tent, and bring it down just on the nail. And then the pose of the woman would be so good, so much strength, and yet such grace! You should have the bowl he drank the milk out of, so as to tell the whole story. No painter living tells a story so well as you do, Conway." Conway Dalrymple knew that the woman was talking nonsense to him, and yet he liked it, and liked her for talking it.

"But Mr. Dalrymple can paint his Sisera without making me a Jael," said Miss Van Siever.

"Of course he can," said Mrs. Broughton.

"But I never will," said the artist. "I conceived the subject as connected with you, and I will never disjoin the two ideas."

"I think it no compliment, I can assure you," said Miss Van Siever.

"And none was intended. But you may observe that artists in all ages have sought for higher types of models in painting women who have been violent or criminal, than have sufficed for them in their portraitures of gentleness and virtue. Look at all the Judiths, and the Lucretias, and the Charlotte Cordays; how much finer the women are than the Madonnas and the Saint Cecilias."

"After that, Clara, you need not scruple to be a Jael," said Mrs. Broughton.

"But I do scruple,—very much; so strongly that I know I never shall do it. In the first place I don't know why Mr. Dalrymple wants it."

"Want it!" said Conway. "I want to paint a striking picture."

"But you can do that without putting me into it."

"No;—not this picture. And why should you object? It is the commonest thing in the world for ladies to sit to artists in that manner."

"People would know it."

"Nobody would know it, so that you need care about it. What would it matter if everybody knew it? We are not proposing anything improper;—are we, Mrs. Broughton?"

"She shall not be pressed if she does not like it," said Mrs. Broughton. "You know I told you before Clara came in, that I was afraid it could not be done."

"And I don't like it," said Miss Van Siever, with some little hestitation in her voice.

"I don't see anything improper in it, if you mean that," said Mrs. Broughton.

"But, mamma!"

"Well, yes; that is the difficulty, no doubt. The only question is, whether your mother is not so very singular, as to make it impossible that you should comply with her in everything."

"I am afraid that I do not comply with her in very much," said Miss Van Siever in her gentlest voice.

"Oh, Clara!"

"You drive me to say so, as otherwise I should be a hypocrite. Of course I ought not to have said it before Mr. Dalrymple."

"You and Mr. Dalrymple will understand all about that, I daresay, before the picture is finished," said Mrs. Broughton.

It did not take much persuasion on the part of Conway Dalrymple to get the consent of the younger lady to be painted, or of the elder to allow the sitting to go on in her room. When the question of easels and other apparatus came to be considered Mrs. Broughton was rather flustered, and again declared with energy that the whole thing must fall to the ground; but a few more words from the painter restored her, and at last the arrangements were made. As Mrs. Dobbs Broughton's dear friend, Madelina Demolines had said, Mrs. Dobbs Broughton liked a fevered existence. "What will Dobbs say?" she exclaimed more than once. And it was decided at last that Dobbs should know nothing about it as long as it could be kept from him. "Of course he shall be told at last," said his wife. "I wouldn't keep anything from the dear fellow for all the world. But if he knew it at first it would be sure to get through Musselboro to your mother."

"I certainly shall beg that Mr. Broughton may not be taken into confidence if Mr. Musselboro is to follow," said Clara. "And it must be understood that I must cease to sit immediately, whatever may be the inconvenience, should mamma speak to me about it."

This stipulation was made and conceded, and then Miss

Van Siever went away, leaving the artist with Mrs. Dobbs Broughton. "And now, if you please, Conway, you had better go too," said the lady, as soon as there had been time for Miss Van Siever to get downstairs and out of the hall-door.

"Of course you are in a hurry to get rid of me."

"Yes, I am."

"A little while ago I improperly said that some suggestion of yours was nonsense and you rebuked me for my blunt incivility. Might not I rebuke you now with equal justice?"

"Do so, if you will;—but leave me. I tell you, Conway, that in these matters you must either be guided by me, or you and I must cease to see each other. It does not do that you should remain here with me longer than the time usually allowed for a morning call. Clara has come and gone, and you also must go. I am sorry to disturb you, for you seem to be so very comfortable in that chair."

"I am comfortable,—and I can look at you. Come;—there can be no harm in saying that, if I say nothing else. Well;—there, now I am gone." Whereupon he got up from his arm-chair.

"But you are not gone while you stand there."

"And you would really wish me to marry that girl?"

"I do,—if you can love her."

"And what about her love?"

"You must win it, of course. She is to be won, like any other woman. The fruit won't fall into your mouth merely because you open your lips. You must climb the tree."

"Still climbing trees in the Hesperides," said Conway. "Love does that, you know; but it is hard to climb the trees without the love. It seems to me that I have done my climbing,—have clomb as high as I knew how, and that the boughs are breaking with me, and that I am likely to get a fall. Do you understand me?"

"I would rather not understand you."

"That is no answer to my question. Do you understand

that at this moment I am getting a fall which will break every bone in my skin and put any other climbing out of the question as far as I am concerned? Do you understand that?"

"No; I do not," said Mrs. Broughton, in a tremulous voice.

"Then I'll go and make love at once to Clara Van Siever. There's enough of pluck left in me to ask her to marry me, and I suppose I could manage to go through the ceremony if she accepted me."

"But I want you to love her," said Mrs. Dobbs Broughton.

"I daresay I should love her well enough after a bit;—that is, if she didn't break my head or comb my hair. I suppose there will be no objection to my saying that you sent me when I ask her?"

"Conway, you will of course not mention my name to her. I have suggested to you a marriage which I think would tend to make you happy, and would give you a stability in life which you want. It is perhaps better that I should be explicit at once. As an unmarried man I cannot continue to know you. You have said words of late which have driven me to this conclusion. I have thought about it much,—too much, perhaps, and I know that I am right. Miss Van Siever has beauty and wealth and intellect, and I think that she would appreciate the love of such a man as you are. Now go." And Mrs. Dobbs Broughton, standing upright, pointed to the door. Conway Dalrymple slowly took his Spanish hat from off the marble slab on which he had laid it, and left the room without saying a word. The interview had been quite long enough, and there was nothing else which he knew how to say with effect.

Croquet is a pretty game out of doors, and chess is delightful in a drawing-room. Battledoor and shuttlecock and hunt-the-slipper have also their attractions. Proverbs are good, and cross questions with crooked answers may be made very amusing. But none of these games are equal

to the game of love-making,—providing that the players can be quite sure that there shall be no heart in the matter. Any touch of heart not only destroys the pleasure of the game, but makes the player awkward and incapable and robs him of his skill. And thus it is that there are many people who cannot play the game at all. A deficiency of some needed internal physical strength prevents the owners of the heart from keeping a proper control over its valves, and thus emotion sets in, and the pulses are accelerated, and feeling supervenes. For such a one to attempt a game of love-making, is as though your friend with the gout should insist on playing croquet. A sense of the ridiculous, if nothing else, should in either case deter the afflicted one from the attempt. There was no such absurdity with our friend Mrs. Dobbs Broughton and Conway Dalrymple. Their valves and pulses were all right. They could play the game without the slightest danger of any inconvenient result;—of any inconvenient result, that is, as regarded their own feelings. Blind people cannot see and stupid people cannot understand,—and it might be that Mr. Dobbs Broughton, being both blind and stupid in such matters, might perceive something of the playing of the game and not know that it was only a game of skill.

When I say that as regarded these two lovers there was nothing of love between them, and that the game was therefore so far innocent, I would not be understood as asserting that these people had no hearts within their bosoms. Mrs. Dobbs Broughton probably loved her husband in a sensible, humdrum way, feeling him to be a bore, knowing him to be vulgar, aware that he often took a good deal more wine than was good for him, and that he was almost as uneducated as a hog. Yet she loved him, and showed her love by taking care that he should have things for dinner which he liked to eat. But in this alone there were to be found none of the charms of a fevered existence, and therefore Mrs. Dobbs Broughton, requiring those charms for her comfort, played her little game with Con-

way Dalrymple. And as regarded the artist himself, let no reader presume him to have been heartless because he flirted with Mrs. Dobbs Broughton. Doubtless he will marry some day, will have a large family for which he will work hard, and will make a good husband to some stout lady who will be careful in looking after his linen. But on the present occasion he fell into some slight trouble in spite of the innocence of his game. As he quitted his friend's room he heard the hall-door slammed heavily; then there was a quick step on the stairs, and on the landing-place above the first flight he met the master of the house, somewhat flurried, as it seemed, and not looking comfortable, either as regarded his person or his temper. "By George, he's been drinking!" Conway said to himself, after the first glance. Now it certainly was the case that poor Dobbs Broughton would sometimes drink at improper hours.

"What the devil are you doing here?" said Dobbs Broughton to his friend the artist. "You're always here. You're here a doosed sight more than I like." Husbands when they have been drinking are very apt to make mistakes as to the purport of the game.

"Why, Dobbs," said the painter, "there's something wrong with you."

"No, there ain't. There's nothing wrong; and if there was, what's that to you? I shan't ask you to pay anything for me, I suppose."

"Well;—I hope not."

"I won't have you here, and let that be an end of it. It's all very well when I choose to have a few friends to dinner, but my wife can do very well without your fal-lalling here all day. Will you remember that, if you please?"

Conway Dalrymple, knowing that he had better not argue any question with a drunken man, took himself out of the house, shrugging his shoulders as he thought of the misery which his poor dear playfellow would now be called upon to endure.

CHAPTER XXVII

A Hero at Home

ON the morning after his visit to Miss Demolines John Eames found himself at the Paddington station asking for a ticket for Guestwick, and as he picked up his change another gentleman also demanded a ticket for the same place. Had Guestwick been as Liverpool or Manchester, Eames would have thought nothing about it. It is a matter of course that men should always be going from London to Liverpool and Manchester; but it seemed odd to him that two men should want first-class tickets for so small a place as Guestwick at the same moment. And when, afterwards, he was placed by the guard in the same carriage with this other traveller, he could not but feel some little curiosity. The man was four or five years Johnny's senior, a good-looking fellow, with a pleasant face, and the outward appurtenances of a gentleman. The intelligent reader will no doubt be aware that the stranger was Major Grantly; but the intelligent reader has in this respect had much advantage over John Eames, who up to this time had never even heard of his cousin Grace Crawley's lover. "I think you were asking for a ticket for Guestwick," said Johnny;—whereupon the major owned that such was the case. "I lived at Guestwick the greater part of my life," said Johnny, "and it's the dullest, dearest little town in all England." "I never was there before," said the major, "and indeed I can hardly say I am going there now. I shall only pass through it." Then he got out his newspaper, and Johnny also got out his, and for a time there was no conversation between them. John remembered how holy was the errand upon which he was intent, and gathered his thoughts together, resolving that having so great a matter on his mind he would think about nothing else and speak about nothing at all. He was going down to

Allington to ask Lily Dale for the last time whether she would be his wife; to ascertain whether he was to be successful or unsuccessful in the one great wish of his life; and, as such was the case with him,—as he had in hand a thing so vital, it could be nothing to him whether the chance companion of his voyage was an agreeable or a disagreeable person. He himself, in any of the ordinary circumstances of life, was prone enough to talk with any one he might meet. He could have travelled for twelve hours together with an old lady, and could listen to her or make her listen to him without half an hour's interruption. But this journey was made on no ordinary occasion, and it behoved him to think of Lily. Therefore, after the first little almost necessary effort at civility, he fell back into gloomy silence. He was going to do his best to win Lily Dale, and this doing of his best would require all his thought and all his energy.

And probably Major Grantly's mind was bent in the same direction. He, too, had this work before him, and could not look upon his work as a thing that was altogether pleasant. He might probably get that which he was intent upon obtaining. He knew,—he almost knew,—that he had won the heart of the girl whom he was seeking. There had been that between him and her which justified him in supposing that he was dear to her, although no expression of affection had ever passed from her lips to her ears. Men may know all that they require to know on that subject without any plainly spoken words. Grace Crawley had spoken no word, and yet he had known,—at any rate had not doubted, that he could have the place in her heart of which he desired to be the master. She would never surrender herself altogether till she had taught herself to be sure of him to whom she gave herself. But she had listened to him with silence that had not rebuked him, and he had told himself that he might venture, without fear of that rebuke as to which the minds of some men are sensitive to a degree which other men cannot even understand.

But for all this Major Grantly could not be altogether happy as to his mission. He would ask Grace Crawley to be his wife; but he would be ruined by his own success. And the remembrance that he would be severed from all his own family by the thing that he was doing, was very bitter to him. In generosity he might be silent about this to Grace, but who can endure to be silent on such a subject to the woman who is to be his wife? And then it would not be possible for him to abstain from explanation. He was now following her down to Allington, a step which he certainly would not have taken but for the misfortune which had befallen her father, and he must explain to her in some sort why he did so. He must say to her,—if not in so many words, still almost as plainly as words could speak,—I am here now to ask you to be my wife, because you specially require the protection and countenance of the man who loves you, in the present circumstances of your father's affairs. He knew that he was doing right;—perhaps had some idea that he was doing nobly; but this very appreciation of his own good qualities made the task before him the more difficult.

Major Grantly had The Times, and John Eames had the Daily News, and they exchanged papers. One had the last Saturday, and the other the last Spectator, and they exchanged those also. Both had the Pall Mall Gazette, of which enterprising periodical they gradually came to discuss the merits and demerits, thus falling into conversation at last, in spite of the weight of the mission on which each of them was intent. Then, at last, when they were within half-an-hour of the end of their journey, Major Grantly asked his companion what was the best inn at Guestwick. He had at first been minded to go on to Allington at once, —to go on to Allington and get his work done, and then return home or remain there, or find the nearest inn with a decent bed, as circumstances might direct him. But on reconsideration, as he drew nearer to the scene of his future operations, he thought that it might be well for him to

'*A village called Allington*'

remain that night at Guestwick. He did not quite know how far Allington was from Guestwick, but he did know that it was still mid-winter, and that the days were very short. "The Magpie" was the best inn, Johnny said. Having lived at Guestwick all his life, and having a mother living there now, he had never himself put up at "The Magpie," but he believed it to be a good country inn. They kept post-horses there, he knew. He did not tell the stranger that his late old friend, Lord De Guest, and his present old friend, Lady Julia, always hired post-horses from "The Magpie," but he grounded his ready assertion on the remembrance of that fact. "I think I shall stay there to-night," said the major. "You'll find it pretty comfortable, I don't doubt," said Johnny. "Though, indeed, it always seems to me that a man alone at an inn has a very bad time of it. Reading is all very well, but one gets tired of it at last. And then I hate horse-hair chairs." "It isn't very delightful," said the major, "but beggars mustn't be choosers." Then there was a pause, after which the major spoke again. "You don't happen to know which way Allington lies?"

"Allington!" said Johnny.

"Yes, Allington. Is there not a village called Allington?"

"There is a village called Allington, certainly. It lies over there." And Johnny pointed with his finger through the window. "As you do not know the country you can see nothing, but I can see the Allington trees at this moment."

"I suppose there is no inn at Allington?"

"There's a public-house, with a very nice clean bedroom. It is called the 'Red Lion.' Mrs. Forrard keeps it. I would quite as soon stay there as at 'The Magpie.' Only if they don't expect you, they wouldn't have much for dinner."

"Then you know the village of Allington?"

"Yes, I know the village of Allington very well. I have friends living there. Indeed, I may say I know everybody in Allington."

"Do you know Mrs. Dale?"

"Mrs. Dale?" said Johnny. "Yes, I know Mrs. Dale. I have known Mrs. Dale pretty nearly all my life." Who could this man be who was going down to see Mrs. Dale,—Mrs. Dale, and consequently, Lily Dale? He thought that he knew Mrs. Dale so well, that she could have no visitor of whom he would not be entitled to have some knowledge. But Major Grantly had nothing more to say at the moment about Mrs. Dale. He had never seen Mrs. Dale in his life, and was now going to her house, not to see her, but a friend of hers. He found that he could not very well explain this to a stranger, and therefore at the moment he said nothing further. But Johnny would not allow the subject to be dropped. "Have you known Mrs. Dale long?" he asked.

"I have not the pleasure of knowing her at all," said the major.

"I thought, perhaps, by your asking after her——"

"I intend to call upon her, that is all. I suppose they will have an omnibus here from 'The Magpie?' " Eames said that there no doubt would be an omnibus from "The Magpie," and then they were at their journey's end.

For the present we will follow John Eames, who went at once to his mother's house. It was his intention to remain there for two or three days, and then go over to the house, or rather to the cottage, of his great ally Lady Julia, which lay just beyond Guestwick Manor, and somewhat nearer to Allington than to the town of Guestwick. He had made up his mind that he would not himself go over to Allington till he could do so from Guestwick Cottage, as it was called, feeling that, under certain untoward circumstances,—should untoward circumstances arise,—Lady Julia's sympathy might be more endurable than that of his mother. But he would take care that it should be known at Allington that he was in the neighbourhood. He understood the necessary strategy of his campaign too well to suppose that he could startle Lily into acquiescence.

With his own mother and sister, John Eames was in these days quite a hero. He was a hero with them now, because in his early boyish days there had been so little about him that was heroic. Then there had been a doubt whether he would ever earn his daily bread, and he had been a very heavy burden on the slight family resources in the matter of jackets and trousers. The pride taken in our Johnny had not been great, though the love felt for him had been warm. But gradually things had changed, and John Eames had become heroic in his mother's eyes. A chance circumstance had endeared him to Earl De Guest, and from that moment things had gone well with him. The earl had given him a watch and had left him a fortune, and Sir Raffle Buffle had made him a private secretary. In the old days, when Johnny's love for Lily Dale was first discussed by his mother and sister, they had thought it impossible that Lily should ever bring herself to regard with affection so humble a suitor;—for the Dales have ever held their heads up in he world. But now there is no misgiving on that score with Mrs. Eames and her daughter. Their wonder is that Lily Dale should be such a fool as to decline the love of such a man. So Johnny was received with the respect due to a hero, as well as with the affection belonging to a son;—by which I mean it to be inferred that Mrs. Eames had got a little bit of fish for dinner as well as a leg of mutton.

"A man came down in the train with me who says he is going over to Allington," said Johnny. "I wonder who he can be. He is staying at 'The Magpie.'"

"A friend of Captain Dale's, probably," said Mary. Captain Dale was the squire's nephew and his heir.

"But this man was not going to the squire's. He was going to the Small House."

"Is he going to stay there?"

"I suppose not, as he asked about the inn." Then Johnny reflected that the man might probably be a friend of Crosbie's, and became melancholy in consequence.

Crosbie might have thought it expedient to send an ambassador down to prepare the ground for him before he should venture again upon the scene himself. If it were so, would it not be well that he, John Eames, should get over to Lily as soon as possible, and not wait till he should be staying with Lady Julia?

It was at any rate incumbent upon him to call upon Lady Julia the next morning, because of his commission. The Berlin wool might remain in his portmanteau till his portmanteau should go with him to the cottage; but he would take the spectacles at once, and he must explain to Lady Julia what the lawyers had told him about the income. So he hired a saddle-horse from "The Magpie" and started after breakfast on the morning after his arrival. In his unheroic days he would have walked,—as he had done, scores of times, over the whole distance from Guestwick to Allington. But now, in these grander days, he thought about his boots and the mud, and the formal appearance of the thing. "Ah dear," he said, to himself, as the nag walked slowly out of the town, "it used to be better with me in the old days. I hardly hoped that she would ever accept me, but at least she had never refused me. And then that brute had not as yet made his way down to Allington!"

He did not go very fast. After leaving the town he trotted on for a mile or so. But when he got to the palings of Guestwick Manor he let the animal walk again, and his mind ran back over the incidents of his life which were connected with the place. He remembered a certain long ramble which he had taken in those woods after Lily had refused him. That had been subsequent to the Crosbie episode in his life, and Johnny had been led to hope by certain of his friends,—especially by Lord De Guest and his sister,—that he might then be successful. But he had been unsuccessful, and had passed the bitterest hour of his life wandering about in those woods. Since that he had been unsuccessful again and again; but the bitterness of failure had not been so strong with him as on that first

occasion. He would try again now, and if he failed, he would fail for the last time. As he was thinking of all this, a gig overtook him on the road, and on looking round he saw that the occupant of the gig was the man who had travelled with him on the previous day in the train. Major Grantly was alone in the gig, and as he recognized John Eames he stopped his horse. "Are you also going to Allington?" he asked. John Eames, with something of scorn in his voice, replied that he had no intention of going to Allington on that day. He still thought that this man might be an emissary from Crosbie, and therefore resolved that but scant courtesy was due to him. "I am on my way there now," said Grantly, "and am going to the house of your friend. May I tell her that I travelled with you yesterday?"

"Yes, sir," said Johnny. "You may tell her that you came down with John Eames."

"And are you John Eames?" asked the major.

"If you have no objection," said Johnny. "But I can hardly suppose you have ever heard my name before?"

"It is familiar to me, because I have the pleasure of knowing a cousin of yours, Miss Grace Crawley."

"My cousin is at present staying at Allington with Mrs. Dale," said Johnny.

"Just so," said the major, who now began to reflect that he had been indiscreet in mentioning Grace Crawley's name. No doubt every one connected with the family, all the Crawleys, all the Dales, and all the Eames's, would soon know the business which had brought him down to Allington; but he need not have taken the trouble of beginning the story against himself. John Eames, in truth, had never even heard Major Grantly's name, and was quite unaware of the fortune which awaited his cousin. Even after what he had now been told, he still suspected the stranger of being an emissary from his enemy; but the major, not giving him credit for his ignorance, was annoyed with himself for having told so much of his own history. "I will tell the ladies that I had the pleasure of

meeting you," he said; "that is, if I am lucky enough to see them." And then he drove on.

"I know I should hate that fellow if I were to meet him anywhere again," said Johnny to himself as he rode on. "When I take an aversion to a fellow at first sight, I always stick to it. It's instinct, I suppose." And he was still giving himself credit for the strength of his instincts when he reached Lady Julia's cottage. He rode at once into the stable-yard, with the privilege of an accustomed friend of the house, and having given up his horse, entered the cottage by the back door. "Is my lady at home, Jemima?" he said to the maid.

"Yes, Mr. John; she is in the drawing-room, and friends of yours are with her." Then he was announced, and found himself in the presence of Lady Julia, Lily Dale, and Grace Crawley.

He was very warmly received. Lady Julia really loved him dearly, and would have done anything in her power to bring about a match between him and Lily. Grace was his cousin, and though she had not seen him often, she was prepared to love him dearly as Lily's lover. And Lily,—Lily loved him dearly too,—if only she could have brought herself to love him as he wished to be loved! To all of them Johnny Eames was something of a hero. At any rate in the eyes of all of them he possessed those virtues which seemed to them to justify them in petting him and making much of him.

"I am so glad you've come,—that is, if you've brought my spectacles," said Lady Julia.

"My pockets are crammed with spectacles," said Johnny.

"And when are you coming to me?"

"I was thinking of Tuesday."

"No; don't come till Wednesday. But I mean Monday. No; Monday won't do. Come on Tuesday,—early, and drive me out. And now tell us the news."

Johnny swore that there was no news. He made a brave

attempt to be gay and easy before Lily; but he failed, and he knew that he failed,—and he knew that she knew that he failed. "Mamma will be so glad to see you," said Lily. "I suppose you haven't seen Bell yet?"

"I only got to Guestwick yesterday afternoon," said he.

"And it will be so nice our having Grace at the Small House;—won't it? Uncle Christopher has quite taken a passion for Grace,—so that I am hardly anybody now in the Allington world."

"By-the-by," said Johnny, "I came down here with a friend of yours, Grace."

"A friend of mine?" said Grace.

"So he says, and he is at Allington at this moment. He passed me in a gig going there."

"And what was his name?" Lily asked.

"I have not the remotest idea," said Johnny. "He is a man about my own age, very good-looking, and apparently very well able to take care of himself. He is short-sighted, and holds a glass in one eye when he looks out of a carriage-window. That's all that I know about him."

Grace Crawley's face had become suffused with blushes at the first mention of the friend and the gig; but then Grace blushed very easily. Lily knew all about it at once;—at once divined who must be the friend in the gig, and was almost beside herself with joy. Lady Julia, who had heard no more of the major than had Johnny, was still clever enough to perceive that the friend must be a particular friend,—for she had noticed Miss Crawley's blushes. And Grace herself had no doubt as to the man. The picture of her lover, with the glass in his eye as he looked out of the window, had been too perfect to admit of a doubt. In her distress she put out her hand and took hold of Lily's dress.

"And you say he is at Allington now?" said Lily.

"I have no doubt he is at the Small House at this moment," said Johnny.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Showing how Major Grantly took a Walk

MAJOR GRANTLY drove his gig into the yard of the "Red Lion" at Allington, and from thence walked away at once to Mrs. Dale's house. When he reached the village he had hardly made up his mind as to the way in which he would begin his attack; but now, as he went down the street, he resolved that he would first ask for Mrs. Dale. Most probably he would find himself in the presence of Mrs. Dale and her daughter, and of Grace also, at his first entrance; and if so, his position would be awkward enough. He almost regretted now that he had not written to Mrs. Dale, and asked for an interview. His task would be very difficult if he should find all the ladies together. But he was strong in the feeling that when his purpose was told it would meet the approval at any rate of Mrs. Dale; and he walked boldly on, and bravely knocked at the door of the Small House, as he had already learned that Mrs. Dale's residence was called by all the neighbourhood. Nobody was at home, the servant said; and then, when the visitor began to make further inquiry, the girl explained that the two young ladies had walked as far as Guestwick Cottage, and that Mrs. Dale was at this moment at the Great House with the squire. She had gone across soon after the young ladies had started. The maid, however, was interrupted before she had finished telling all this to the major, by finding her mistress behind her in the passage. Mrs. Dale had returned, and had entered the house from the lawn.

"I am here now, Jane," said Mrs. Dale, "if the gentleman wishes to see me."

Then the major announced himself. "My name is Major Grantly," said he; and he was blundering on with some words about his own intrusion, when Mrs. Dale begged him to follow her into the drawing-room. He had

muttered something to the effect that Mrs. Dale would not know who he was; but Mrs. Dale knew all about him, and had heard the whole of Grace's story from Lily. She and Lily had often discussed the question whether, under existing circumstances, Major Grantly should feel himself bound to offer his hand to Grace, and the mother and daughter had differed somewhat on the matter. Mrs. Dale had held that he was not so bound, urging that the unfortunate position in which Mr. Crawley was placed was so calamitous to all connected with him, as to justify any man, not absolutely engaged, in abandoning the thoughts of such a marriage. Mrs. Dale had spoken of Major Grantly's father and mother and brother and sister, and had declared her opinion that they were entitled to consideration. But Lily had opposed this idea very stoutly, asserting that in an affair of love a man should think neither of father or brother or mother or sister. "If he is worth anything," Lily had said, "he will come to her now,—now in her trouble; and will tell her that she at least has got a friend who will be true to her. If he does that, then I shall think that there is something of the poetry and nobleness of love left." In answer to this Mrs. Dale had replied that women had no right to expect from men such self-denying nobility as that. "I don't expect it, mamma," said Lily. "And I am sure that Grace does not. Indeed I am quite sure that Grace does not expect even to see him ever again. She never says so, but I know that she has made up her mind about it. Still I think he ought to come." "It can hardly be that a man is bound to do a thing, the doing of which, as you confess, would be almost more than noble," said Mrs. Dale. And so the matter had been discussed between them. But now, as it seemed to Mrs. Dale, the man had come to do this noble thing. At any rate he was there in her drawing-room, and before either of them had sat down he had contrived to mention Grace. "You may not probably have heard my name," he said, "but I am acquainted with your friend, Miss Crawley."

"I know your name very well, Major Grantly. My brother-in-law who lives over yonder, Mr. Dale, knows your father very well,—or he did some years ago. And I have heard him say that he remembers you."

"I recollect. He used to be staying at Ullathorne. But that is a long time ago. Is he at home now?"

"Mr. Dale is almost always at home. He very rarely goes away, and I am sure would be glad to see you."

Then there was a little pause in the conversation. They had managed to seat themselves, and Mrs. Dale had said enough to put her visitor fairly at his ease. If he had anything special to say to her, he must say it,—any request or proposition to make as to Grace Crawley, he must make it. And he did make it at once. "My object in coming to Allington," he said, "was to see Miss Crawley."

"She and my daughter have taken a long walk to call on a friend, and I am afraid they will stay for lunch; but they will certainly be home between three and four, if that is not too long for you to remain at Allington."

"O dear, no," said he. "It will not hurt me to wait."

"It certainly will not hurt me, Major Grantly. Perhaps you will lunch with me?"

"I'll tell you what, Mrs. Dale; if you'll permit me, I'll explain to you why I have come here. Indeed, I have intended to do so all through, and I can only ask you to keep my secret, if after all it should require to be kept."

"I will certainly keep any secret that you may ask me to keep," said Mrs. Dale, taking off her bonnet.

"I hope there may be no need of one," said Major Grantly. "The truth is, Mrs. Dale, that I have known Miss Crawley for some time,—nearly for two years now, and—I may as well speak it out at once,—I have made up my mind to ask her to be my wife. That is why I am here." Considering the nature of the statement, which must have been embarrassing, I think that it was made with fluency and simplicity.

"Of course, Major Grantly, you know that I have no

authority with our young friend," said Mrs. Dale. "I mean that she is not connected with us by family ties. She has a father and mother, living, as I believe, in the same county with yourself."

"I know that, Mrs. Dale."

"And you may, perhaps, understand that, as Miss Crawley is now staying with me, I owe it in a measure to her friends to ask you whether they are aware of your intention."

"They are not aware of it."

"I know that at the present moment they are in great trouble."

Mrs. Dale was going on, but she was interrupted by Major Grantly. "That is just it," he said. "There are circumstances at present which make it almost impossible that I should go to Mr. Crawley and ask his permission to address his daughter. I do not know whether you have heard the whole story?"

"As much, I believe, as Grace could tell me."

"He is, I believe, in such a state of mental distress as to be hardly capable of giving me a considerate answer. And I should not know how to speak to him, or how not to speak to him, about this unfortunate affair. But, Mrs. Dale, you will, I think, perceive that the same circumstances make it imperative upon me to be explicit to Miss Crawley. I think I am the last man to boast of a woman's regard, but I had learned to think that I was not indifferent to Grace. If that be so, what must she think of me if I stay away from her now?"

"She understands too well the weight of the misfortune which has fallen upon her father, to suppose that any one not connected with her can be bound to share it."

"That is just it. She will think that I am silent for that reason. I have determined that that shall not keep me silent, and, therefore, I have come here. I may, perhaps, be able to bring comfort to her in her trouble. As regards my worldly position,—though, indeed, it will not be very

good,—as hers is not good either, you will not think yourself bound to forbid me to see her on that head."

"Certainly not. I need hardly say that I fully understand that, as regards money, you are offering everything where you can get nothing."

"And you understand my feeling?"

"Indeed, I do,—and appreciate the great nobility of your love for Grace. You shall see her here, if you wish it,—and to-day, if you choose to wait." Major Grantly said that he would wait and would see Grace on that afternoon. Mrs. Dale again suggested that he should lunch with her, but this he declined. She then proposed that he should go across and call upon the squire, and thus consume his time. But to this he also objected. He was not exactly in the humour, he said, to renew so old and so slight an acquaintance at that time. Mr. Dale would probably have forgotten him, and would be sure to ask what had brought him to Allington. He would go and take a walk, he said, and come again exactly at half-past three. Mrs. Dale again expressed her certainty that the young ladies would be back by that time, and Major Grantly left the house.

Mrs. Dale when she was left alone could not but compare the good fortune which was awaiting Grace, with the evil fortune which had fallen on her own child. Here was a man who was at all points a gentleman. Such, at least, was the character which Mrs. Dale at once conceded to him. And Grace had chanced to come across this man, and to please his eye, and satisfy his taste, and be loved by him. And the result of that chance would be that Grace would have everything given to her that the world has to give worth acceptance. She would have a companion for her life whom she could trust, admire, love, and of whom she could be infinitely proud. Mrs. Dale was not at all aware whether Major Grantly might have five hundred a year to spend, or five thousand,—or what sum intermediate between the two,—nor did she give much of her thoughts at the moment to that side of the subject. She knew without

thinking of it,—or fancied that she knew, that there were means sufficient for comfortable living. It was solely the nature and character of the man that was in her mind, and the sufficiency that was to be found in them for a wife's happiness. But her daughter, her Lily, had come across a man who was a scoundrel, and, as the consequence of that meeting, all her life was marred! Could any credit be given to Grace for her success, or any blame attached to Lily for her failure. Surely not the latter! How was her girl to have guarded herself from a love so unfortunate, or have avoided the rock on which her vessel had been shipwrecked? Then many bitter thoughts passed through Mrs. Dale's mind, and she almost envied Grace Crawley her lover. Lily was contented to remain as she was, but Lily's mother could not bring herself to be satisfied that her child should fill a lower place in the world than other girls. It had ever been her idea,—an idea probably never absolutely uttered even to herself, but not the less practically conceived,—that it is the business of a woman to be married. That her Lily should have been won and not worn, had been, and would be, a trouble to her for ever.

Major Grantly went back to the inn and saw his horse fed, and smoked a cigar, and then, finding that it was still only just one o'clock, he started for a walk. He was careful not to go out of Allington by the road he had entered it, as he had no wish to encounter Grace and her friend on their return into the village; so he crossed a little brook which runs at the bottom of the hill on which the chief street of Allington is built, and turned into a field-path to the left as soon as he had got beyond the houses. Not knowing the geography of the place he did not understand that by taking that path he was making his way back to the squire's house; but it was so; and after sauntering on for about a mile and crossing back again over the stream, of which he took no notice, he found himself leaning across a gate, and looking into a paddock on the other side of which was the high wall of a gentleman's garden. To avoid this he went

on a little further and found himself on a farm road, and before he could retrace his steps so as not to be seen, he met a gentleman whom he presumed to be the owner of the house. It was the squire surveying his home farm, as was his daily custom; but Major Grantly had not perceived that the house must of necessity be Allington House, having been aware that he had passed the entrance to the place, as he entered the village on the other side. "I'm afraid I'm intruding," he said, lifting his hat. "I came up the path yonder, not knowing that it would lead me so close to a gentleman's house."

"There is a right of way through the fields on to the Guestwick Road," said the squire, "and therefore you are not trespassing in any sense; but we are not particular about such things down here, and you would be very welcome if there were no right of way. If you are a stranger, perhaps you would like to see the outside of the old house. People think it picturesque."

Then Major Grantly became aware that this must be the squire. and he was annoyed with himself for his own awkwardness in having thus come upon the house. He would have wished to keep himself altogether unseen if it had been possible,—and especially unseen by this old gentleman, to whom, now that he had met him, he was almost bound to introduce himself. But he was not absolutely bound to do so, and he determined that he would still keep his peace. Even if the squire should afterwards hear of his having been there, what would it matter? But to proclaim himself at the present moment would be disagreeable to him. He permitted the squire, however, to lead him to the front of the house, and in a few moments was standing on the terrace hearing an account of the architecture of the mansion.

"You can see the date still in the brickwork of one of the chimneys,—that is, if your eyes are very good you can see it,—1617. It was completed in that year, and very little has been done to it since. We think the chimneys are pretty."

"They are very pretty," said the major. "Indeed, the house altogether is as graceful as it can be."

"Those trees are old, too," said the squire, pointing to two cedars which stood at the side of the house. "They say they are older than the house, but I don't feel sure of it. There was a mansion here before, very nearly, though not quite, on the same spot."

"Your own ancestors were living here before that, I suppose?" said Grantly, meaning to be civil.

"Well, yes; two or three hundred years before it, I suppose. If you don't mind coming down to the churchyard, you'll get an excellent view of the house;—by far the best that there is. By-the-by, would you like to step in and take a glass of wine?"

"I'm very much obliged," said the major, "but indeed I'd rather not." Then he followed the squire down to the churchyard, and was shown the church as well as the view of the house, and the vicarage, and a view over to Allington woods from the vicarage gate, of which the squire was very fond, and in this way he was taken back on to the Guestwick side of the village, and even down on to the road by which he had entered it, without in the least knowing where he was. He looked at his watch and saw that it was past two. "I'm very much obliged to you, sir," he said, again taking off his hat to the squire, "and if I shall not be intruding I'll make my way back to the village."

"What village?" said the squire.

"To Allington," said Grantly.

"This is Allington," said the squire; and as he spoke, Lily Dale and Grace Crawley turned a corner from the Guestwick road and came close upon them. "Well, girls, I did not expect to see you," said the squire; "your mamma told me you wouldn't be back till it was nearly dark, Lily."

"We have come back earlier than we intended," said Lily. She of course had seen the stranger with her uncle, and knowing the ways of the squire in such matters had expected to be introduced to him. But the reader will be

aware that no introduction was possible. It never occurred to Lily that this man could be the Major Grantly of whom she and Grace had been talking during the whole length of the walk home. But Grace and her lover had of course known each other at once, and Grantly, though he was abashed and almost dismayed by the meeting, of course came forward and gave his hand to his friend. Grace in taking it did not utter a word.

"Perhaps I ought to have introduced myself to you as Major Grantly?" said he, turning to the squire.

"Major Grantly! Dear me! I had no idea that you were expected in these parts."

"I have come without being expected."

"You are very welcome, I'm sure. I hope your father is well? I used to know him some years ago, and I daresay he has not forgotten me." Then, while the girls stood by in silence, and while Grantly was endeavouring to escape, the squire invited him very warmly to send his portmanteau up to the house. "We'll have the ladies up from the house below, and make it as little dull for you as possible." But this would not have suited Grantly,—at any rate would not suit him till he should know what answer he was to have. He excused himself therefore, pleading a positive necessity to be at Guestwick that evening, and then, explaining that he had already seen Mrs. Dale, he expressed his intention of going back to the Small House in company with the ladies, if they would allow him. The squire, who did not as yet quite understand it all, bade him a formal adieu, and Lily led the way home down behind the churchyard wall and through the bottom of the gardens belonging to the Great House. She of course knew now who the stranger was, and did all in her power to relieve Grace of her embarrassment. Grace had hitherto not spoken a single word since she had seen her lover, nor did she say a word to him in their walk to the house. And, in truth, he was not much more communicative than Grace. Lily did all the talking, and with wonderful female skill contrived

to have some words ready for use till they all found themselves together in Mrs. Dale's drawing-room. "I have caught a major, mamma, and landed him," said Lily laughing, "but I'm afraid, from what I hear, that you had caught him first."

CHAPTER XXIX

Miss Lily Dale's Logic

LADY JULIA DE GUEST always lunched at one exactly, and it was not much past twelve when John Eames made his appearance at the cottage. He was of course told to stay, and of course said that he would stay. It had been his purpose to lunch with Lady Julia; but then he had not expected to find Lily Dale at the cottage. Lily herself would have been quite at her ease, protected by Lady Julia, and somewhat protected also by her own powers of fence, had it not been that Grace was there also. But Grace Crawley, from the moment that she had heard the description of the gentleman who looked out of the window with his glass in his eye, had by no means been at her ease. Lily saw at once that she could not be brought to join in any conversation, and both John and Lady Julia, in their ignorance of the matter in hand, made matters worse.

"So that was Major Grantly?" said John. "I have heard of him before, I think. He is a son of the old archdeacon, is he not?"

"I don't know about old archdeacon," said Lady Julia. "The archdeacon is the son of the old bishop, whom I remember very well. And it is not so very long since the bishop died, either."

"I wonder what he's doing at Allington?" said Johnny.

"I think he knows my uncle," said Lily.

"But he's going to call on your mother," he said. Then Johnny remembered that the major had said something as to knowing Miss Crawley, and for the moment he was silent.

"I remember when they talked of making the son a bishop also," said Lady Julia.

"What;—this same man who is now a major?" said Johnny.

"No, you goose. He is not the son; he is the grandson. They were going to make the archdeacon a bishop, and I remember hearing that he was terribly disappointed. He is getting to be an old man now, I suppose; and yet, dear me, how well I remember his father."

"He didn't look like a bishop's son," said Johnny.

"How does a bishop's son look?" Lily asked.

"I suppose he ought to have some sort of clerical tinge about him; but this fellow had nothing of that kind."

"But then this fellow, as you call him," said Lily, "is only the son of an archdeacon."

"That accounts for it, I suppose," said Johnny.

But during all this time Grace did not say a word, and Lily perceived it. Then she bethought herself as to what she had better do. Grace, she knew, could not be comfortable where she was. Nor, indeed, was it probable that Grace would be very comfortable in returning home. There could not be much ease for Grace till the coming meeting between her and Major Grantly should be over. But it would be better that Grace should go back to Allington at once; and better also, perhaps, for Major Grantly that it should be so. "Lady Julia," she said, "I don't think we'll mind stopping for lunch to-day."

"Nonsense, my dear; you promised."

"I think we must break our promise; I do indeed. You mustn't be angry with us." And Lily looked at Lady Julia, as though there were something which Lady Julia ought to understand, which she, Lily, could not quite explain. I

fear that Lily was false, and intended her old friend to believe that she was running away because John Eames had come there.

"But you will be famished," said Lady Julia.

"We shall live through it," said Lily.

"It is out of the question that I should let you walk all the way here from Allington and all the way back without taking something."

"We shall just be home in time for lunch if we go now," said Lily. "Will not that be best, Grace?"

Grace hardly knew what would be best. She only knew that Major Grantly was at Allington, and that he had come thither to see her. The idea of hurrying back after him was unpleasant to her, and yet she was so flurried that she felt thankful to Lily for taking her away from the cottage. The matter was compromised at last. They remained for half an hour, and ate some biscuits and pretended to drink a glass of wine and then they started. John Eames, who in truth believed that Lily Dale was running away from him, was by no means well pleased, and when the girls were gone, did not make himself so agreeable to his old friend as he should have done. "What a fool I am to come here at all," he said, throwing himself into an arm-chair as soon as the front door was closed.

"That's very civil to me, John!"

"You know what I mean, Lady Julia. I am a fool to come near her, until I can do so without thinking more of her than I do of any other girl in the county."

"I don't think you have anything to complain of as yet," said Lady Julia, who had in some sort perceived that Lily's retreat had been on Grace's account, and not on her own. "It seems to me that Lily was very glad to see you, and when I told her that you were coming to stay here, and would be near them for some days, she seemed to be quite pleased;—she did indeed."

"Then why did she run away the moment I came in?" said Johnny.

"I think it was something you said about that man who has gone to Allington."

"What difference can the man make to her? The truth is, I despise myself;—I do indeed, Lady Julia. Only think of my meeting Crosbie at dinner the other day, and his having the impertinence to come up and shake hands with me."

"I suppose he didn't say anything about what happened at the Paddington Station?"

"No; he didn't speak about that. I wish I knew whether she cares for him still. If I thought she did, I would never speak another word to her,—I mean about myself. Of course I am not going to quarrel with them. I am not such a fool as that." Then Lady Julia tried to comfort him, and succeeded so far that he was induced to eat the mince veal that had been intended for the comfort and support of the two young ladies who had run away.

"Do you think it is he?" were the first words which Grace said when they were fairly on their way back together.

"I should think it must be. What other man can there be, of that sort, who would be likely to come to Allington to see you?"

"His coming is not likely. I cannot understand that he should come. He let me leave Silverbridge without seeing me,—and I thought that he was quite right."

"And I think he is quite right to come here. I am very glad he has come. It shows that he has really something like a heart inside him. Had he not come, or sent, or written, or taken some step before the trial comes on, to make you know that he was thinking of you, I should have said that he was as hard,—as hard as any other man that I ever heard of. Men are so hard! But I don't think he is, now. I am beginning to regard him as the one chevalier sans peur et sans reproche, and to fancy that you ought to go down on your knees before him, and kiss his highness's shoebuckle. In judging of men one's mind vacillates so quickly between the scorn which is due to a false man and

the worship which is due to a true man." Then she was silent for a moment, but Grace said nothing, and Lily continued, "I tell you fairly, Grace, that I shall expect very much from you now."

"Much in what way, Lily?"

"In the way of worship. I shall not be content that you should merely love him. If he has come here, as he must have done, to say that the moment of the world's reproach is the moment he has chosen to ask you to be his wife, I think that you will owe him more than love."

"I shall owe him more than love, and I will pay him more than love," said Grace. There was something in the tone of her voice as she spoke which made Lily stop her and look up into her face. There was a smile there which Lily had never seen before, and which gave a beauty to her which was wonderful to Lily's eyes. Surely this lover of Grace's must have seen her smile like that, and therefore had loved her and was giving such wonderful proof of his love. "Yes," continued Grace, standing and looking at her friend, "you may stare at me, Lily, but you may be sure that I will do for Major Grantly all the good that I can do for him."

"What do you mean, Grace?"

"Never mind what I mean. You are very imperious in managing your own affairs, and you must let me be so equally in mine."

"But I tell you everything."

"Do you suppose that if—if—if in real truth it can possibly be the case that Major Grantly shall have come here to offer me his hand when we are all ground down into the dust, as we are, do you think that I will let him sacrifice himself? Would you?"

"Certainly. Why not? There will be no sacrifice. He will be asking for that which he wishes to get; and you will be bound to give it to him."

"If he wants it, where is his nobility? If it be as you say, he will have shown himself noble, and his nobility will

have consisted in this, that he has been willing to take that which he does not want, in order that he may succour one whom he loves. I also will succour one whom I love, as best I know how." Then she walked on quickly before her friend, and Lily stood for a moment thinking before she followed her. They were now on a field-path, by which they were enabled to escape the road back to Allington for the greater part of the distance, and Grace had reached a stile, and had clambered over it before Lily had caught her.

"You must not go away by yourself," said Lily.

"I don't wish to go away by myself."

"I want you to stop a moment and listen to me. I am sure you are wrong in this,—wrong for both your sakes. You believe that he loves you?"

"I thought he did once; and if he has come here to see me, I suppose he does still."

"If that be the case, and if you also love him——"

"I do. I make no mystery about that to you. I do love him with all my heart. I love him to-day, now that I believe him to be here, and that I suppose I shall see him, perhaps this very afternoon. And I loved him yesterday, when I thought that I should never see him again. I do love him. I do. I love him so well that I will never do him an injury."

"That being so, if he makes you an offer you are bound to accept it. I do not think that you have an alternative."

"I have an alternative, and I shall use it. Why don't you take my cousin John?"

"Because I like somebody else better. If you have got as good a reason I won't say another word to you."

"And why don't you take that other person?"

"Because I cannot trust his love; that is why. It is not very kind of you, opening my sores afresh, when I am trying to heal yours."

"Oh, Lily, am I unkind,—unkind to you, who have been so generous to me?"

"I'll forgive you all that and a deal more if you will only

listen to me and try to take my advice. Because this major of yours does a generous thing, which is for the good of you both,—the infinite good of both of you,—you are to emulate his generosity by doing a thing which will be for the good of neither of you. That is about it. Yes, it is, Grace. You cannot doubt that he had been meaning this for some time past; and of course, if he looks upon you as his own,—and I daresay, if the whole truth is to be told, he does——"

"But I am not his own."

"Yes, you are, in one sense; you have just said so with a great deal of energy. And if it is so,—let me see, where was I?"

"Oh, Lily, you need not mind where you were."

"But I do mind, and I hate to be interrupted in my arguments. Yes, just that. If he saw his cow sick, he'd try to doctor the cow in her sickness. He sees that you are sick, and of course he comes to your relief."

"I am not Major Grantly's cow."

"Yes, you are."

"Nor his dog, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is his, except—except, Lily, the dearest friend that he has on the face of the earth. He cannot have a friend that will go further for him than I will. He will never know how far I will go to serve him. You don't know his people. Nor do I know them. But I know what they are. His sister is married to a marquis."

"What has that to do with it?" said Lily, sharply. "If she were married to an archduke, what difference would that make?"

"And they are proud people—all of them—and rich; and they live with high persons in the world."

"I didn't care though they lived with the royal family, and had the Prince of Wales for their bosom friend. It only shows how much better he is than they are."

"But think what my family is,—how we are situated. When my father was simply poor I did not care about it,

because he has been born and bred a gentleman. But now he is disgraced. Yes, Lily, he is. I am bound to say so, at any rate to myself, when I am thinking of Major Grantly; and I will not carry that disgrace into a family which would feel it so keenly as they would do." Lily, however, went on with her arguments, and was still arguing when they turned the corner of the lane, and came upon Lily's uncle and the major himself.

CHAPTER XXX

Showing what Major Grantly did after his Walk

IN going down from the church to the Small House Lily Dale had all the conversation to herself. During some portion of the way the path was only broad enough for two persons, and here Major Grantly walked by Lily's side, while Grace followed them. Then they found their way into the house, and Lily made her little speech to her mother about catching the major. "Yes, my dear, I have seen Major Grantly before," said Mrs. Dale. "I suppose he has met you on the road. But I did not expect that any of you would have returned so soon." Some little explanation followed as to the squire, and as to Major Grantly's walk, and after that the great thing was to leave the two lovers alone. "You will dine here, of course, Major Grantly," Mrs. Dale said. But this he declined. He had learned, he said, that there was a night-train up to London, and he thought that he would return to town by that. He had intended, when he left London, to get back as soon as possible. Then Mrs. Dale, having hesitated for two or three seconds, got up and left the room, and Lily followed. "It seems very odd and abrupt," said Mrs. Dale to her daughter, "but I suppose it is best." "Of course it is best, mamma. Do as one would be done by,—that's the

only rule. It will be much better for her that she should have it over."

Grace was seated on a sofa, and Major Grantly got up from his chair, and came and stood opposite to her. "Grace," he said, "I hope you are not angry with me for coming down to see you here."

"No, I am not angry," she said.

"I have thought a great deal about it, and your friend, Miss Prettyman, knew that I was coming. She quite approves of my coming."

"She has written to me, but did not tell me of it," said Grace, not knowing what other answer to make.

"No,—she could not have done that. She had no authority. I only mention her name because it will have weight with you, and because I have not done that which, under other circumstances, perhaps, I should have been bound to do. I have not seen your father."

"Poor papa," said Grace.

"I have felt that at the present moment I could not do so with any success. It has not come of any want of respect either for him or for you. Of course, Grace, you know why I am here?" He paused, and then remembering that he had no right to expect an answer to such a question, he continued, "I have come here, dearest Grace, to ask you to be my wife, and to be a mother to Edith. I know that you love Edith."

"I do indeed."

"And I have hoped sometimes,—though I suppose I ought not to say so,—but I have hoped and almost thought sometimes, that you have been willing to—to love me, too. It is better to tell the truth simply, is it not?"

"I suppose so," said Grace.

"And therefore, and because I love you dearly myself, I have come to ask you to be my wife." Saying which he opened out his hand, and held it to her. But she did not take it. "There is my hand, Grace. If your heart is as I would have it you can give me yours, and I shall want nothing else

to make me happy." But still she made no motion towards granting him his request. "If I have been too sudden," he said, "you must forgive me for that. I have been sudden and abrupt, but as things are, no other way has been open to me. Can you not bring yourself to give me some answer, Grace?" His hand had now fallen again to his side, but he was still standing before her.

She had said no word to him as yet, except that one in which she had acknowledged her love for his child, and had expressed no surprise, even in her countenance, at his proposal. And yet the idea that he should do such a thing, since the idea that he certainly would do it had become clear to her, had filled her with a world of surprise. No girl ever lived with any beauty belonging to her who had a smaller knowledge of her own possession than Grace Crawley. Nor had she the slightest pride in her own acquirements. That she had been taught in many things more than had been taught to other girls, had come of her poverty and of the desolation of her home. She had learned to read Greek and Italian because there had been nothing else for her to do in that sad house. And, subsequently, accuracy of knowledge had been necessary for the earning of her bread. I think that Grace had at times been weak enough to envy the idleness and almost to envy the ignorance of other girls. Her figure was light, perfect in symmetry, full of grace at all points; but she had thought nothing of her figure, remembering only the poverty of her dress, but remembering also with a brave resolution that she would never be ashamed of it. And as her acquaintance with Major Grantly had begun and had grown, and as she had learned to feel unconsciously that his company was pleasanter to her than that of any other person she knew, she had still told herself that anything like love must be out of the question. But then words had been spoken, and there had been glances in his eye, and a tone in his voice, and a touch upon his fingers, of which she could not altogether refuse to accept the meaning. And others

had spoken to her of it, the two Miss Prettymans and her friend Lily. Yet she would not admit to herself that it could be so, and she would not allow herself to confess to herself that she loved him. Then had come the last killing misery to which her father had been subjected. He had been accused of stealing money, and had been committed to be tried for the theft. From that moment, at any rate, any hope, if there had been a hope, must be crushed. But she swore to herself bravely that there had been no such hope. And she assured herself also that nothing had passed which had entitled her to expect anything beyond ordinary friendship from the man of whom she certainly had thought much. Even if those touches and those tones and those glances had meant anything, all such meaning must be annihilated by this disgrace which had come upon her. She might know that her father was innocent; she might be sure, at any rate, that he had been innocent in intention; but the world thought differently, and she, her brothers and sister, and her mother and her poor father, must bend to the world's opinion. If those dangerous joys had meant anything, they must be taken as meaning nothing more.

Thus she had argued with herself, and, fortified by such self-teachings, she had come down to Allington. Since she had been with her friends there had come upon her from day to day a clear conviction that her arguments had been undoubtedly true,—a clear conviction which had been very cold to her heart in spite of all her courage. She had expected nothing, hoped for nothing, and yet when nothing came she was sad. She thought of one special half-hour in which he had said almost all that he might have said,—more than he ought to have said;—of a moment during which her hand had remained in his; of a certain pressure with which he had put her shawl upon her shoulders. If he had only written to her one word to tell her that he believed her father was innocent! But no; she had no right to expect anything from him. And then Lily had ceased to talk of him, and she did expect nothing. Now he was there

before her, asking her to come to him and be his wife. Yes; she would kiss his shoebuckles, only that the kissing of his shoebuckles would bring upon him that injury which he should never suffer from her hands! He had been generous, and her self-pride was satisfied. But her other pride was touched, and she also would be generous. "Can you not bring yourself to give me some answer?" he had said to her. Of course she must give him an answer, but how should she give it?

"You are very kind," she said.

"I would be more than kind."

"So you are. Kind is a cold word when used to such a friend at such a time."

"I would be everything on earth to you that a man can be to a woman."

"I know I ought to thank you if I knew how. My heart is full of thanks; it is, indeed."

"And is there no room for love there?"

"There is no room for love in our house, Major Grantly. You have not seen papa."

"No; but, if you wish it, I will do so at once."

"It would do no good,—none. I only asked you because you can hardly know how sad is our state at home."

"But I cannot see that that need deter you, if you can love me."

"Can you not? If you saw him, and the house, and my mother, you would not say so. In the Bible it is said of some season that it is not a time for marrying, or for giving in marriage. And so it is with us."

"I am not pressing you as to a day. I only ask you to say that you will be engaged to me,—so that I may tell my own people, and let it be known."

"I understand all that. I know how good you are. But, Major Grantly, you must understand me also when I assure you that it cannot be so."

"Do you mean that you refuse me altogether?"

"Yes; altogether."

"And why?"

"Must I answer that question? Ought I to be made to answer it? But I will tell you fairly, without touching on anything else, that I feel that we are all disgraced, and that I will not take disgrace into another family."

"Grace, do you love me?"

"I love no one now,—that is, as you mean. I can love no one. I have no room for any feeling except for my father and mother, and for us all. I should not be here now but that I save my mother the bread that I should eat at home."

"Is it as bad as that?"

"Yes, it is as bad as that. It is much worse than that, if you knew it all. You cannot conceive how low we have fallen. And now they tell me that my father will be found guilty, and will be sent to prison. Putting ourselves out of the question, what would you think of a girl who could engage herself to any man under such circumstances? What would you think of a girl who would allow herself to be in love in such a position? Had I been ten times engaged to you I would have broken it off." Then she got up to leave him.

But he stopped her, holding her by the arm. "What you have said will make me say what I certainly should never have said without it. I declare that we are engaged."

"No, we are not," said Grace.

"You have told me that you loved me."

"I never told you so."

"There are other ways of speaking than the voice; and I will boast to you, though to no one else, that you have told me so. I believe you love me. I shall hold myself as engaged to you, and I shall think you false if I hear that you listen to another man. Now, good-by, Grace;—my own Grace."

"No, I am not your own," she said, through her tears.

"You are my own, my very own. God bless you, dear, dear, dearest Grace. You shall hear from me in a day or two, and shall see me as soon as this horrid trial is over." Then he took her in his arms before she could escape from

him, and kissed her forehead and her lips, while she struggled in his arms. After that he left the room and the house as quickly as he could, and was seen no more of the Dales upon that occasion.

CHAPTER XXXI

Showing how Major Grantly returned to Guestwick

GRACE, when she was left alone, threw herself upon the sofa, and hid her face in her hands. She was weeping almost hysterically, and had been utterly dismayed and frightened by her lover's impetuosity. Things had gone after a fashion which her imagination had not painted to her as possible. Surely she had the power to refuse the man if she pleased. And yet she felt as she lay there weeping that she did in truth belong to him as part of his goods, and that her generosity had been foiled. She had especially resolved that she would not confess to any love for him. She had made no such confession. She had guarded herself against doing so with all the care which she knew how to use. But he had assumed the fact, and she had been unable to deny it. Could she have lied to him, and have sworn that she did not love him? Could she have so perjured herself, even in support of her generosity? Yes, she would have done so,—so she told herself,—if a moment had been given to her for thought. She ought to have done so, and she blamed herself for being so little prepared for the occasion. The lie would be useless now. Indeed, she would have no opportunity for telling it; for of course she would not answer,—would not even read his letter. Though he might know that she loved him, yet she would not be his wife. He had forced her secret from her, but he could not force her to marry him. She did love him, but he should never be disgraced by her love.

After a while she was able to think of his conduct, and she believed that she ought to be very angry with him. He had taken her roughly in his arms, and had insulted her. He had forced a kiss from her. She had felt his arms warm and close and strong about her, and had not known whether she was in paradise or in purgatory. She was very angry with him. She would send back his letter to him without reading it,—without opening it, if that might be possible. He had done that to her which nothing could justify. But yet,—yet,—yet how dearly she loved him! Was he not a prince of men? He had behaved badly, of course; but had any man ever behaved so badly before in so divine a way? Was it not a thousand pities that she should be driven to deny anything to a lover who so richly deserved everything that could be given to him? He had kissed her hand as he let her go, and now, not knowing what she did, she kissed the spot on which she had felt his lips. His arm had been round her waist, and the old frock which she wore should be kept by her for ever, because it had been so graced.

What was she now to say to Lily and to Lily's mother? Of one thing there was no doubt. She would never tell them of her lover's wicked audacity. That was a secret never to be imparted to any ears. She would keep her resentment to herself, and not ask the protection of any vicarious wrath. He could never so sin again, that was certain; and she would keep all knowledge and memory of the sin for her own purposes. But how could it be that such a man as that, one so good though so sinful, so glorious though so great a trespasser, should have come to such a girl as her and have asked for her love? Then she thought of her father's poverty and the misery of her own condition, and declared to herself that it was very wonderful.

Lily was the first to enter the room, and she, before she did so, learned from the servant that Major Grantly had left the house. "I heard the door, miss, and then I saw the top of his hat out of the pantry window." Armed with this

certain information Lily entered the drawing-room, and found Grace in the act of rising from the sofa.

"Am I disturbing you?" said Lily.

"No; not at all. I am glad you have come. Kiss me, and be good to me." And she twined her arms about Lily and embraced her.

"Am I not always good to you, you simpleton? Has he been good?"

"I don't know what you mean?"

"And have you been good to him?"

"As good as I knew how, Lily."

"And where is he?"

"He has gone away. I shall never see him any more, Lily."

Then she hid her face upon her friend's shoulder and broke forth again into hysterical tears.

"But tell me, Grace, what he said;—that is, if you mean to tell me!"

"I will tell you everything;—that is, everything I can." And Grace blushed as she thought of the one secret which she certainly would not tell.

"Has he,—has he done what I said he would do? Come, speak out boldly. Has he asked you to be his wife?"

"Yes," said Grace, barely whispering the word.

"And you have accepted him?"

"No, Lily, I have not. Indeed, I have not. I did not know how to speak, because I was surprised;—and he, of course, could say what he liked. But I told him as well as I could, that I would not marry him."

"And why;—did you tell him why?"

"Yes; because of papa!"

"Then, if he is the man I take him to be, that answer will go for nothing. Of course he knew all that before he came here. He did not think you were an heiress with forty thousand pounds. If he is in earnest, that will go for nothing. And I think he is in earnest."

"And so was I in earnest."

"Well, Grace;—we shall see."

"I suppose I may have a will of my own, Lily."

"Do not be so sure of that. Women are not allowed to have wills of their own on all occasions. Some man comes in a girl's way, and she gets to be fond of him, just because he does come in her way. Well; when that has taken place, she has no alternative but to be taken if he chooses to take her; or to be left, if he chooses to leave her."

"Lily, don't say that."

"But I do say it. A man may assure himself that he will find for himself a wife who shall be learned, or beautiful, or six feet high, if he wishes it, or who has red hair, or red eyes, or red cheeks,—just what he pleases; and he may go about till he finds it, as you can go about and match your worsteds. You are a fool if you buy a colour you don't want. But we can never match our worsteds for that other piece of work, but are obliged to take any colour that comes,—and, therefore, it is that we make such a jumble of it! Here's mamma. We must not be philosophical before her. Mamma, Major Grantly has—skedaddled."

"Oh, Lily, what a word!"

"But, oh, mamma, what a thing! Fancy his going away and not saying a word to anybody!"

"If he had anything to say to Grace, I suppose he said it."

"He asked her to marry him, of course. We none of us had any doubt about that. He swore to her that she and none but she should be his wife,—and all that kind of thing. But he seems to have done it in the most prosaic way;—and now he has gone away without saying a word to any of us. I shall never speak to him again,—unless Grace asks me."

"Grace, my dear, may I congratulate you?" said Mrs. Dale.

Grace did not answer, as Lily was too quick for her. "Oh, she has refused him, of course. But Major Grantly is a man of too much sense to expect that he should succeed the first time. Let me see; this is the fourteenth. These

clocks run fourteen days, and, therefore, you may expect him again about the twenty-eighth. For myself, I think you are giving him an immense deal of unnecessary trouble, and that if he left you in the lurch it would only serve you right; but you have the world with you, I'm told. A girl is supposed to tell a man two fibs before she may tell him one truth."

"I told him no fib, Lily. I told him that I would not marry him, and I will not."

"But why not, dear Grace?" said Mrs. Dale.

"Because the people say that papa is a thief!" Having said this, Grace walked slowly out of the room, and neither Mrs. Dale nor Lily attempted to follow her.

"She's as good as gold," said Lily, when the door was closed.

"And he;—what of him?"

"I think he is good, too; but she has told me nothing yet of what he has said to her. He must be good, or he would not have come down here after her. But I don't wonder at his coming, because she is so beautiful! Once or twice as we were walking back to-day, I thought her face was the most lovely that I had ever seen. And did you see her just now, as she spoke of her father?"

"Oh, yes;—I saw her."

"Think what she will be in two or three years' time, when she becomes a woman. She talks French, and Italian, and Hebrew for anything that I know; and she is perfectly beautiful. I never saw a more lovely figure;—and she has spirit enough for a goddess. I don't think that Major Grantly is such a fool after all."

"I never took him for a fool."

"I have no doubt all his own people do;—or they will, when they hear of it. But, mamma, she will grow to be big enough to walk atop of all the Lady Hartletops in England. It will all come right at last."

"You think it will?"

"Oh, yes. Why should it not? If he is worth having, it

will;—and I think he is worth having. He must wait till this horrid trial is over. It is clear to me that Grace thinks that her father will be convicted."

"But he cannot have taken the money."

"I think he took it, and I think it wasn't his. But I don't think he stole it. I don't know whether you can understand the difference."

"I am afraid a jury won't understand it."

"A jury of men will not. I wish they could put you and me on it, mamma. I would take my best boots and eat them down to the heels, for Grace's sake, and for Major Grantly's. What a good-looking man he is!"

"Yes, he is."

"And so like a gentleman! I'll tell you what, mamma; we won't say anything to her about him for the present. Her heart will be so full she will be driven to talk, and we can comfort her better in that way." The mother and daughter agreed to act upon these tactics, and nothing more was said to Grace about her lover on that evening.

Major Grantly walked from Mrs. Dale's house to the inn and ordered his gig, and drove himself out of Allington, almost without remembering where he was or whither he was going. He was thinking solely of what had just occurred, and of what, on his part, should follow as the result of that meeting. Half at least of the noble deeds done in this world are due to emulation, rather than to the native nobility of the actors. A young man leads a forlorn hope because another young man has offered to do so. Jones in the hunting-field rides at an impracticable fence because he is told that Smith took it three years ago. And Walker puts his name down for ten guineas at a charitable dinner, when he hears Thompson's read out for five. And in this case the generosity and self-denial shown by Grace warmed and cherished similar virtues within her lover's breast. Some few weeks ago Major Grantly had been in doubt as to what his duty required of him in reference to Grace Crawley; but he had no doubt whatsoever now. In

the fervour of his admiration he would have gone straight to the archdeacon, had it been possible, and have told him what he had done and what he intended to do. Nothing now should stop him;—no consideration, that is, either as regarded money or position. He had pledged himself solemnly, and he was very glad that he had pledged himself. He would write to Grace and explain to her that he trusted altogether in her father's honour and innocence, but that no consideration as to that ought to influence either him or her in any way. If, independently of her father, she could bring herself to come to him and be his wife, she was bound to do so now, let the position of her father be what it might. And thus, as he drove his gig back towards Guestwick, he composed a very pretty letter to the lady of his love.

And as he went, at the corner of the lane which led from the main road up to Guestwick cottage, he again came upon John Eames, who was also returning to Guestwick. There had been a few words spoken between Lady Julia and Johnny respecting Major Grantly after the girls had left the cottage, and Johnny had been persuaded that the strange visitor to Allington could have no connection with his arch-enemy. "And why has he gone to Allington?" John demanded, somewhat sternly, of his hostess.

"Well; if you ask me, I think he has gone there to see your cousin, Grace Crawley."

"He told me that he knew Grace," said John, looking as though he were conscious of his own ingenuity in putting two and two together very cleverly.

"Your cousin Grace is a very pretty girl," said Lady Julia.

"It's a long time since I've seen her," said Johnny.

"Why, you saw her just this minute," said Lady Julia.

"I didn't look at her," said Johnny. Therefore, when he again met Major Grantly, having continued to put two and two together with great ingenuity, he felt quite sure that the man had nothing to do with the arch-enemy, and

he determined to be gracious. "Did you find them at home at Allington?" he said, raising his hat.

"How do you do again?" said the major. "Yes, I found your friend Mrs. Dale at home."

"But not her daughter, or my cousin? They were up there;—where I've come from. But, perhaps, they had got back before you left."

"I saw them both. They found me on the road with Mr. Dale."

"What,—the squire? Then you have seen everybody?"

"Everybody I wished to see at Allington."

"But you wouldn't stay at the 'Red Lion'? "

"Well, no. I remembered that I wanted to get back to London; and as I had seen my friends, I thought I might as well hurry away."

"You knew Mrs. Dale before, then?"

"No, I didn't. I never saw her in my life before. But I knew the old squire when I was a boy. However, I should have said friend. I went to see one friend, and I saw her."

John Eames perceived that his companion put a strong emphasis on the word "her," as though he were determined to declare boldly that he had gone to Allington solely to see Grace Crawley. He had not the slightest objection to recognizing in Major Grantly a suitor for his cousin's hand. He could only reflect what an unusually fortunate girl Grace must be if such a thing could be true. Of those poor Crawleys he had only heard from time to time that their misfortunes were as numerous as the sands on the sea-shore, and as unsusceptible of any fixed and permanent arrangement. But, as regarded Grace, here would be a very permanent arrangement. Tidings had reached him that Grace was a great scholar, but he had never heard much of her beauty. It must probably be the case that Major Grantly was fond of Greek. There was, he reminded himself, no accounting for tastes; but as nothing could be more respectable than such an alliance, he thought that it would become him to be civil to the major.

"I hope you found her quite well. I had barely time to speak to her myself."

"Yes, she was very well. This is a sad thing about her father."

"Very sad," said Johnny. Perhaps the major had heard about the accusation for the first time to-day, and was going to find an escape on that plea. If such was the case, it would not be so well to be particularly civil.

"I believe Mr. Crawley is a cousin of yours?" said the major.

"His wife is my mother's first-cousin. Their mothers were sisters."

"She is an excellent woman."

"I believe so. I don't know much about them myself,—that is, personally. Of course I have heard of this charge that has been made against him. It seems to me to be a great shame."

"Well, I can't exactly say that it is a shame. I do not know that there has been anything done with a feeling of persecution or of cruelty. It is a great mystery, and we must have it cleared up if we can."

"I don't suppose he can have been guilty," said Johnny.

"Certainly not in the ordinary sense of the word. I heard all the evidence against him."

"Oh, you did?"

"Yes," said the major. "I live near them in Barsetshire, and I am one of his bailsmen."

"Then you are an old friend, I suppose?"

"Not exactly that; but circumstances make me very much interested about them. I fancy that the cheque was left in his house by accident, and that it got into his hands he didn't know how, and that when he used it he thought it was his."

"That's queer," said Johnny.

"He is very odd, you know."

"But it's a kind of oddity that they don't like at the assizes."

"The great cruelty is," said the major, "that whatever may be the result, the punishment will fall so heavily upon his wife and daughters. I think the whole county ought to come forward and take them by the hand. Well, good-by. I'll drive on, as I'm a little in a hurry."

"Good-by," said Johnny. "I'm very glad to have had the pleasure of meeting you." "He's a good sort of a fellow after all," he said to himself when the gig had passed on. "He wouldn't have talked in that way if he had meant to hang back."

CHAPTER XXXII

Mr. Toogood

MR. CRAWLEY had declared to Mr. Robarts, that he would summon no legal aid to his assistance at the coming trial. The reader may, perhaps, remember the impetuosity with which he rejected the advice on this subject which was conveyed to him by Mr. Robarts with all the authority of Archdeacon Grantly's name. "Tell the archdeacon," he had said, "that I will have none of his advice." And then Mr. Robarts had left him, fully convinced that any further interference on his part could be of no avail. Nevertheless, the words which had then been spoken were not without effect. This coming trial was ever present to Mr. Crawley's mind, and though, when driven to discuss the subject, he would speak of it with high spirit, as he had done both to the bishop and to Mr. Robarts, yet in his long hours of privacy, or when alone with his wife, his spirit was anything but high. "It will kill me," he would say to her. "I shall get salvation thus. Death will relieve me, and I shall never be called upon to stand before those cruel eager eyes." Then would she try to say words of comfort, sometimes soothing him as

though he were a child, and at others bidding him be a man, and remember that as a man he should have sufficient endurance to bear the eyes of any crowd that might be there to look at him.

"I think I will go up to London," he said to her one evening, very soon after the day of Mr. Robarts's visit.

"Go up to London, Josiah!" Mr. Crawley had not been up to London once since they had been settled at Hogglestock, and this sudden resolution on his part frightened his wife. "Go up to London, dearest! and why?"

"I will tell you why. They all say that I should speak to some man of the law whom I may trust about this coming trial. I trust no one in these parts. Not, mark you, that I say that they are untrustworthy. God forbid that I should so speak or even so think of men whom I know not. But the matter has become so common in men's mouths at Barchester and at Silverbridge, that I cannot endure to go among them and to talk of it. I will go up to London, and I will see your cousin, Mr. John Toogood, of Gray's Inn." Now in this scheme there was an amount of everyday prudence which startled Mrs. Crawley almost as much as did the prospect of the difficulties to be overcome if the journey were to be made. Her husband, in the first place, had never once seen Mr. John Toogood; and in days very long back, when he and she were making their first gallant struggle,—for in those days it had been gallant,—down in their Cornish curacy, he had reprobated certain Toogood civilities,—professional civilities,—which had been proffered, perhaps, with too plain an intimation that on the score of relationship the professional work should be done without payment. The Mr. Toogood of those days, who had been Mrs. Crawley's uncle, and the father of Mrs. Eames and grandfather of our friend Johnny Eames, had been much angered by some correspondence which had grown up between him and Mr. Crawley, and from that day there had been a cessation of all intercourse between the families. Since those days that Toogood had been

gathered to the ancient Toogoods of old, and the son reigned on the family throne in Raymond's Buildings. The present Toogood was therefore first-cousin to Mrs. Crawley. But there had been no intimacy between them. Mrs. Crawley had not seen her cousin since her marriage,—as indeed she had seen none of her relations, having been estranged from them by the singular bearing of her husband. She knew that her cousin stood high in his profession, the firm of Toogood and Crump,—Crump and Toogood it should have been properly called in these days,—having always held its head up high above all dirty work; and she felt that her husband could look for advice from no better source. But how would such a one as he manage to tell his story to a stranger? Nay, how would he find his way alone into the lawyer's room, to tell his story at all,—so strange was he to the world? And then the expense! "If you do not wish me to apply to your cousin, say so, and there shall be an end of it," said Mr. Crawley in an angry tone.

"Of course I would wish it. I believe him to be an excellent man, and a good lawyer."

"Then why should I not go to his chambers? In formâ pauperis I must go to him, and must tell him so. I cannot pay him for the labour of his counsel, nor for such minutes of his time as I shall use."

"Oh, Josiah, you need not speak of that."

"But I must speak of it. Can I go to a professional man, who keeps as it were his shop open for those who may think fit to come, and purchase of him, and take of his goods, and afterwards, when the goods have been used, tell him that I have not the price in my hand? I will not do that, Mary. You think that I am mad, that I know not what I do. Yes,—I see it in your eyes; and you are sometimes partly right. But I am not so mad but that I know what is honest. I will tell your cousin that I am sore straitened, and brought down into the very dust by misfortune. And I will beseech him, for what of ancient feeling of family he may

bear to you, to listen to me for a while. And I will be very short, and, if need be, will bide his time patiently, and perhaps he may say a word to me that may be of use."

There was certainly very much in this to provoke Mrs. Crawley. It was not only that she knew well that her cousin would give ample and immediate attention, and lend himself thoroughly to the matter without any idea of payment, —but that she could not quite believe that her husband's humility was true humility. She strove to believe it, but knew that she failed. After all it was only a feeling on her part. There was no argument within herself about it. An unpleasant taste came across the palate of her mind, as such a savour will sometimes, from some unexpected source, come across the palate of the mouth. Well; she could only gulp at it, and swallow it and excuse it. Among the salad that comes from your garden a bitter leaf will now and then make its way into your salad-bowl. Alas, there were so many bitter leaves ever making their way into her bowl! "What I mean is, Josiah, that no long explanation will be needed. I think, from what I remember of him, that he would do for us anything that he could do."

"Then I will go to the man, and will humble myself before him. Even that, hard as it is to me, may be a duty that I owe." Mr. Crawley as he said this was remembering that he was a clergyman of the Church of England, and that he had a rank of his own in the country, which, did he ever do such a thing as go out to dinner in company, would establish for him a certain right of precedence; whereas this attorney, of whom he was speaking, was, so to say, nobody in the eyes of the world.

"There need be no humbling, Josiah, other than that which is due from man to man in all circumstances. But never mind; we will not talk about that. If it seems good to you, go to Mr. Toogood. I think that it is good. May I write to him and say that you will go?"

"I will write myself; it will be more seemly."

Then the wife paused before she asked the next question,

—paused for some minute or two, and then asked it with anxious doubt,—"And may I go with you, Josiah?"

"Why should two go when one can do the work?" he answered sharply. "Have we money so much at command?"

"Indeed, no."

"You should go and do it all, for you are wiser in these things than I am, were it not that I may not dare to show—that I submit myself to my wife."

"Nay, my dear!"

"But it is ay, my dear. It is so. This is a thing such as men do; not such as women do, unless they be forlorn and unaided of men. I know that I am weak where you are strong; that I am crazed where you are clear-witted."

"I meant not that, Josiah. It was of your health that I thought."

"Nevertheless it is as I say; but, for all that, it may not be that you should do my work. There are those watching me who would say, 'Lo! he confesses himself incapable.' And then some one would whisper something of a madhouse. Mary, I fear that worse than a prison."

"May God in His mercy forbid such cruelty!"

"But I must look to it, my dear. Do you think that that woman, who sits there at Barchester in high places, disgracing herself and that puny ecclesiastical lord who is her husband,—do you think that she would not immure me if she could? She is a she-wolf,—only less reasonable than the dumb brute as she sharpens her teeth in malice coming from anger, and not in malice coming from hunger as do the outer wolves of the forest. I tell you, Mary, that if she had a colourable ground for her action, she would swear to-morrow that I am mad."

"You shall go alone to London."

"Yes, I will go alone. They shall not say that I cannot yet do my own work as a man should do it. I stood up before him, the puny man who is called a bishop, and before her who makes herself great by his littleness, and I scorned them both to their faces. Though the shoes which

I had on were all broken, as I myself could not but see when I stood, yet I was greater than they were with all their purple and fine linen."

"But, Josiah, my cousin will not be harsh to you."

"Well,—and if he be not?"

"Ill-usage you can bear; and violent ill-usage, such as that which Mrs. Proudie allowed herself to exhibit, you can repay with interest; but kindness seems to be too heavy a burden for you."

"I will struggle. I will endeavour. I will speak but little, and, if possible, I will listen much. Now, my dear, I will write to this man, and you shall give me the address that is proper for him." Then he wrote the letter, not accepting a word in the way of dictation from his wife, but "craving the great kindness of a short interview, for which he ventured to become a solicitor, urged thereto by his wife's assurance that one with whom he was connected by family ties would do as much as this for the possible preservation of the honour of the family." In answer to this, Mr. Toogood wrote back as follows:—"Dear Mr. Crawley, I will be at my office all Thursday morning next from ten to two, and will take care that you shan't be kept waiting for me above ten minutes. You parsons never like waiting. But hadn't you better come and breakfast with me and Maria at nine? then we'd have a talk as we walk to the office. Yours always, THOMAS TOOGOOD." And the letter was dated from the attorney's private house in Tavistock Square.

"I am sure he means to be kind," said Mrs. Crawley.

"Doubtless he means to be kind. But his kindness is rough;—I will not say unmannerly, as the word would be harsh. I have never even seen the lady whom he calls Maria."

"She is his wife!"

"So I would venture to suppose; but she is unknown to me. I will write again, and thank him, and say that I will be with him at ten to the moment."

There were still many things to be settled before the journey could be made. Mr. Crawley, in his first plan, proposed that he should go up by night mail train, travelling in the third class, having walked over to Silverbridge to meet it; that he should then walk about London from 5 A.M. to 10 A.M., and afterwards come down by an afternoon train to which a third class was also attached. But at last his wife persuaded him that such a task as that, performed in the middle of the winter, would be enough to kill any man, and that, if attempted, it would certainly kill him; and he consented at last to sleep the night in town,—being specially moved thereto by discovering that he could, in conformity with this scheme, get in and out of the train at a station considerably nearer to him than Silverbridge, and that he could get a return-ticket at a third-class fare. The whole journey, he found, could be done for a pound, allowing him seven shillings for his night's expenses in London; and out of the resources of the family there were produced two sovereigns, so that in the event of accident he would not utterly be a castaway from want of funds.

So he started on his journey after an early dinner, almost hopeful through the new excitement of a journey to London, and his wife walked with him nearly as far as the station. "Do not reject my cousin's kindness," were the last words she spoke.

"For his professional kindness, if he will extend it to me, I will be most thankful," he replied. She did not dare to say more; nor had she dared to write privately to her cousin, asking for any special help, lest by doing so she should seem to impugn the sufficiency and stability of her husband's judgment. He got up to town late at night, and having made inquiry of one of the porters, he hired a bed for himself in the neighbourhood of the railway station. Here he had a cup of tea and a morsel of bread-and-butter, and in the morning he breakfasted again on the same fare. "No, I have no luggage," he had said to the girl at the public-house, who had asked him as to his travelling gear.

"If luggage be needed as a certificate of respectability, I will pass on elsewhere," said he. The girl stared, and assured him that she did not doubt his respectability. "I am a clergyman of the Church of England," he had said, "but my circumstances prevent me from seeking a more expensive lodging." They did their best to make him comfortable, and, I think, almost disappointed him in not heaping further misfortunes on his head.

He was in Raymond's Buildings at half-past nine, and for half an hour walked up and down the umbrageous pavement,—it used to be umbrageous, but perhaps the trees have gone now,—before the doors of the various chambers. He could hear the clock strike from Gray's Inn; and the moment that it had struck he was turning in, but was encountered in the passage by Mr. Toogood, who was equally punctual with himself. Strange stories about Mr. Crawley had reached Mr. Toogood's household, and that Maria, the mention of whose Christian name had been so offensive to the clergyman, had begged her husband not to be a moment late. Poor Mr. Toogood, who on ordinary days did perhaps take a few minutes' grace, was thus hurried away almost with his breakfast in his throat, and, as we have seen, just saved himself. "Perhaps, sir, you are Mr. Crawley?" he said, in a good-humoured, cheery voice. He was a good-humoured, cheery-looking man, about fifty years of age, with grizzled hair and sunburnt face, and large whiskers. Nobody would have taken him to be a partner in any of those great houses of which we have read in history,—the Quirk, Gammon and Snaps of the profession, or the Dodson and Foggs, who are immortal.

"That is my name, sir," said Mr. Crawley, taking off his hat and bowing low, "and I am here by appointment to meet Mr. Toogood, the solicitor, whose name I see affixed upon the door-post."

"I am Mr. Toogood, the solicitor, and I hope I see you quite well, Mr. Crawley." Then the attorney shook hands

with the clergyman and preceded him upstairs to the front room on the first floor. "Here we are, Mr. Crawley, and pray take a chair. I wish you could have made it convenient to come and see us at home. We are rather long, as my wife says,—long in family, she means, and therefore are not very well off for spare beds——"

"Oh, sir."

"I've twelve of 'em living, Mr. Crawley,—from eighteen years, the eldest,—a girl, down to eighteen months the youngest,—a boy, and they go in and out, boy and girl, boy and girl, like the cogs of a wheel. They ain't such far away distant cousins from your own young ones —only first, once, as we call it."

"I am aware that there is a family tie, or I should not have ventured to trouble you."

"Blood is thicker than water; isn't it? I often say that. I heard of one of your girls only yesterday. She is staying somewhere down in the country, not far from where my sister lives—Mrs. Eames, the widow of poor John Eames, who never did any good in this world. I daresay you've heard of her?"

"The name is familiar to me, Mr. Toogood."

"Of course it is. I've a nephew down there just now, and he saw your girl the other day;—very highly he spoke of her too. Let me see;—how many is it you have?"

"Three living, Mr. Toogood."

"I've just four times three;—that's the difference. But I comfort myself with the text about the quiver you know; and I tell them that when they've eat up all the butter, they'll have to take their bread dry."

"I trust the young people take your teaching in a proper spirit."

"I don't know much about spirit. There's spirit enough. My second girl, Lucy, told me that if I came home to-day without tickets for the pantomime I shouldn't have any dinner allowed me. That's the way they treat me. But we understand each other at home. We're all pretty good

friends there, thank God. And there isn't a sick chick among the boiling."

"You have many mercies for which you should indeed be thankful," said Mr. Crawley, gravely.

"Yes, yes, yes; that's true. I think of that sometimes, though perhaps not so much as I ought to do. But the best way to be thankful is to use the goods the gods provide you. 'The lovely Thais sits beside you. Take the goods the gods provide you.' I often say that to my wife, till the children have got to calling her Thais. The children have it pretty much their own way with us, Mr. Crawley."

By this time Mr. Crawley was almost beside himself, and was altogether at a loss how to bring in the matter on which he wished to speak. He had expected to find a man who in the hurry of London business might perhaps just manage to spare him five minutes,—who would grapple instantly with the subject that was to be discussed between them, would speak to him half-a-dozen hard words of wisdom, and would then dismiss him and turn on the instant to other matters of important business;—but here was an easy familiar fellow, who seemed to have nothing on earth to do, and who at this first meeting had taken advantage of a distant family connexion to tell him everything about the affairs of his own household. And then how peculiar were the domestic traits which he told! What was Mr. Crawley to say to a man who had taught his own children to call their mother Thais? Of Thais Mr. Crawley did know something, and he forgot to remember that perhaps Mr. Toogood knew less. He felt it, however, to be very difficult to submit the details of his case to a gentleman who talked in such a strain about his own wife and children.

But something must be done. Mr. Crawley, in his present frame of mind, could not sit and talk about Thais all day. "Sir," he said, "the picture of your home is very pleasant, and I presume that plenty abounds there."

"Well, you know, pretty toll-loll for that. With twelve

of 'em, Mr. Crawley, I needn't tell you they are not all going to have castles and parks of their own, unless they can get 'em off their own bats. But I pay upwards of a hundred a year each for my eldest three boys' schooling, and I've been paying eighty for the girls. Put that and that together and see what it comes to. Educate, educate, educate; that's my word."

"No better word can be spoken, sir."

"I don't think there's a girl in Tavistock Square that can beat Polly,—she's the eldest, called after her mother, you know;—that can beat her at the piano. And Lucy has read Lord Byron and Tom Moore all through, every word of 'em. By Jove, I believe she knows most of Tom Moore by heart. And the young uns are coming on just as well."

"Perhaps, sir, as your time is, no doubt, precious——"

"Just at this time of the day we don't care so much about it, Mr. Crawley; and one doesn't catch a new cousin every day, you know."

"However, if you will allow me,——"

"We'll tackle to? Very well; so be it. Now, Mr. Crawley, let me hear what it is that I can do for you." Of a sudden, as Mr. Toogood spoke these last words, the whole tone of his voice seemed to change, and even the position of his body became so much altered as to indicate a different kind of man. "You just tell your story in your own way, and I won't interrupt you till you've done. That's always the best."

"I must first crave your attention to an unfortunate preliminary," said Mr. Crawley.

"And what is that?"

"I come before you in formâ pauperis." Here Mr. Crawley paused and stood up before the attorney with his hands crossed one upon the other, bending low, as though calling attention to the poorness of his raiment. "I know that I have no justification for my conduct. I have nothing of reason to offer why I should trespass upon your time. I am a poor man, and cannot pay you for your services."

"Oh, bother!" said Mr. Toogood, jumping up out of his chair.

"I do not know whether your charity will grant me that which I ask——"

"Don't let's have any more of this," said the attorney. "We none of us like this kind of thing at all. If I can be of any service to you, you're as welcome to it as flowers in May; and as for billing my first-cousin, which your wife is, I should as soon think of sending in an account to my own."

"But, Mr. Toogood,——"

"Do you go on now with your story; I'll put the rest all right."

"I was bound to be explicit, Mr. Toogood."

"Very well; now you have been explicit with a vengeance, and you may heave a-head. Let's hear the story, and if I can help you I will. When I've said that, you may be sure I mean it. I've heard something of it before; but let me hear it all from you."

Then Mr. Crawley began and told the story. Mr. Toogood was actually true to his promise and let the narrator go on with his narrative without interruption. When Mr. Crawley came to his own statement that the cheque had been paid to him by Mr. Soames, and went on to say that that statement had been false,—"I told him that, but I told him so wrongly," and then paused, thinking that the lawyer would ask some question, Mr. Toogood simply said, "Go on; go on. I'll come back to all that when you've done." And he merely nodded his head when Mr. Crawley spoke of his second statement, that the money had come from the dean. "We had been bound together by close ties of early familiarity," said Mr. Crawley, "and in former years our estates in life were the same. But he has prospered and I have failed. And when creditors were importunate, I consented to accept relief in money which had previously been often offered. And I must acknowledge, Mr. Toogood, while saying this, that I have known,—have known with heartfelt agony,—that at former times my

wife has taken that from my friend Mr. Arabin, with hand half-hidden from me, which I have refused. Whether it be better to eat—the bread of charity,—or not to eat bread at all, I, for myself, have no doubt," he said; "but when the want strikes one's wife and children, and the charity strikes only oneself, then there is a doubt." When he spoke thus, Mr. Toogood got up, and thrusting his hands into his waistcoat pockets walked about the room, exclaiming, "By George, by George, by George!" But he still let the man go on with his story, and heard him out at last to the end.

"And they committed you for trial at the next Barchester assizes?" said the lawyer.

"They did."

"And you employed no lawyer before the magistrates?"

"None;—I refused to employ any one."

"You were wrong there, Mr. Crawley. I must be allowed to say that you were wrong there."

"I may possibly have been so from your point of view, Mr. Toogood; but permit me to explain. I——"

"It's no good explaining now. Of course you must employ a lawyer for your defence,—an attorney who will put the case into the hands of counsel."

"But that I cannot do, Mr. Toogood."

"You must do it. If you don't do it, your friends should do it for you. If you don't do it, everybody will say you're mad. There isn't a single solicitor you could find within half a mile of you at this moment who wouldn't give you the same advice,—not a single man, either, who has got a head on his shoulders worth a turnip."

When Mr. Crawley was told that madness would be laid to his charge if he did not do as he was bid, his face became very black, and assumed something of that look of determined obstinacy which it had worn when he was standing in the presence of the bishop and Mrs. Proudie. "It may be so," he said. "It may be as you say, Mr. Toogood. But

these neighbours of yours, as to whose collected wisdom you speak with so much certainty, would hardly recommend me to indulge in a luxury for which I have no means of paying."

"Who thinks about paying under such circumstances as these?"

"I do, Mr. Toogood."

"The wretchedest costermonger that comes to grief has a barrister in a wig and gown to give him his chance of escape."

"But I am not a costermonger, Mr. Toogood,—though more wretched perhaps than any costermonger now in existence. It is my lot to have to endure the sufferings of poverty, and at the same time not to be exempt from those feelings of honour to which poverty is seldom subject. I cannot afford to call in legal assistance for which I cannot pay,—and I will not do it."

"I'll carry the case through for you. It certainly is not just my line of business,—but I'll see it carried through for you."

"Out of your own pocket?"

"Never mind; when I say I'll do a thing, I'll do it."

"No, Mr. Toogood; this thing you can not do. But do not suppose I am the less grateful."

"What is it I can do then? Why do you come to me if you won't take my advice?"

After this the conversation went on for a considerable time without touching on any point which need be brought palpably before the reader's eye. The attorney continued to beg the clergyman to have his case managed in the usual way, and went so far as to tell him that he would be ill-treating his wife and family if he continued to be obstinate. But the clergyman was not shaken from his resolve, and was at last able to ask Mr. Toogood what he had better do,—how he had better attempt to defend himself,—on the understanding that no legal aid was to be employed. When this question was at last asked in such a

way as to demand an answer, Mr. Toogood sat for a moment or two in silence. He felt that an answer was not only demanded, but almost enforced; and yet there might be much difficulty in giving it.

"Mr. Toogood," said Mr. Crawley, seeing the attorney's hesitation, "I declare to you before God, that my only object will be to enable the jury to know about this sad matter all that I know myself. If I could open my breast to them I should be satisfied. But then a prisoner can say nothing; and what he does say is ever accounted false."

"That is why you should have legal assistance."

"We had already come to a conclusion on that matter, as I thought," said Mr. Crawley.

Mr. Toogood paused for another moment or two, and then dashed at his answer; or rather, dashed at a counter question. "Mr. Crawley, where did you get the cheque? You must pardon me, you know; or, if you wish it, I will not press the question. But so much hangs on that, you know."

"Every thing would hang on it,—if I only knew."

"You mean that you forget?"

"Absolutely; totally. I wish, Mr. Toogood, I could explain to you the toilsome perseverance with which I have cudgelled my poor brains, endeavouring to extract from them some scintilla of memory that would aid me."

"Could you have picked it up in the house?"

"No;—no; that I did not do. Dull as I am, I know so much. It was mine of right, from whatever source it came to me. I know myself as no one else can know me, in spite of the wise man's motto. Had I picked up a cheque in my house, or on the road, I should not have slept till I had taken steps to restore it to the seeming owner. So much I can say. But, otherwise, I am in such matters so shandy-pated, that I can trust myself to be sure of nothing. I thought;—I certainly thought——"

"You thought what?"

"I thought that it had been given to me by my friend the

dean. I remember well that I was in his library at Barchester, and I was somewhat provoked in spirit. There were lying on the floor hundreds of volumes, all glittering with gold, and reeking with new leather from the binders. He asked me to look at his toys. Why should I look at them? There was a time, but the other day it seemed, when he had been glad to borrow from me such treasures as I had. And it seemed to me that he was heartless in showing me these things. Well; I need not trouble you with all that."

"Go on;—go on. Let me hear it all, and I shall learn something."

"I know now how vain, how vile I was. I always know afterwards how low the spirit has grovelled. I had gone to him then because I had resolved to humble myself, and, for my wife's sake, to ask my friend—for money. With words which were very awkward,—which no doubt were ungracious—I had asked him, and he had bid me follow him from his hall into his library. There he left me awhile, and on returning told me with a smile that he had sent for money,—and, if I can remember, the sum he named was fifty pounds."

"But it has turned out, as you say, that you have paid fifty pounds with his money,—besides the cheque."

"That is true;—that is quite true. There is no doubt of that. But as I was saying,—then he fell to talking about the books, and I was angered. I was very sore in my heart. From the moment in which the words of beggary had passed from my lips, I had repented. And he had laughed and had taken it gaily. I turned upon him and told him that I had changed my mind. I was grateful, but I would not have his money. And so I prepared to go. But he argued with me, and would not let me go,—telling me of my wife and of my children, and while he argued there came a knock at the door, and something was handed in, and I knew that it was the hand of his wife."

"It was the money, I suppose?"

"Yes, Mr. Toogood; it was the money. And I became

the more uneasy, because she herself is rich. I liked it the less because it seemed to come from her hand. But I took it. What could I do when he reminded me that I could not keep my parish unless certain sums were paid? He gave me a little parcel in a cover, and I took it,—and left him sorrowing. I had never before come quite to that;—though, indeed, it had in fact been often so before. What was the difference whether the alms were given into my hands or into my wife's?"

"You are too touchy about it all, Mr. Crawley."

"Of course I am. Do you try it, and see whether you will be touchy. You have worked hard at your profession, I daresay."

"Well, yes; pretty well. To tell the truth, I have worked hard. By George, yes! It's not so bad now as it used to be."

"But you have always earned your bread; bread for yourself, and bread for your wife and little ones. You can buy tickets for the play."

"I couldn't always buy tickets, mind you."

"I have worked as hard, and yet I cannot get bread. I am older than you, and I cannot earn my bare bread. Look at my clothes. If you had to go and beg from Mr. Crump, would not you be touchy?"

"As it happens, Crump isn't so well off as I am."

"Never mind. But I took it, and went home, and for two days I did not look at it. And then there came an illness upon me, and I know not what passed. But two men who had been hard on me came to the house when I was out, and my wife was in a terrible state; and I gave her the money, and she went into Silverbridge and paid them."

"And this cheque was with what you gave her?"

"No; I gave her money in notes,—just fifty pounds. When I gave it her, I thought I gave it all; and yet afterwards I thought I remembered that in my illness I had found the cheque with the dean's money. But it was not so."

"You are sure of that?"

"He has said that he put five notes of 10*l.* each into the cover, and such notes I certainly gave to my wife."

"Where then did you get the cheque?" Mr. Crawley again paused before he answered. "Surely, if you will exert your mind, you will remember," said the lawyer. "Where did you get the cheque?"

"I do not know."

Mr. Toogood threw himself back in his chair, took his knee up into his lap to nurse it, and began to think of it. He sat thinking of it for some minutes without a word,—perhaps for five minutes, though the time seemed to be much longer to Mr. Crawley, who was, however, determined that he would not interrupt him. And Mr. Toogood's thoughts were at variance with Mr. Toogood's former words. Perhaps, after all, this scheme of Mr. Crawley's,—or rather the mode of defence on which he had resolved without any scheme,—might be the best of which the case admitted. It might be well that he should go into court without a lawyer. "He has convinced me of his innocence," Mr. Toogood said to himself, "and why should he not convince a jury? He has convinced me, not because I am specially soft, or because I love the man,—for as to that I dislike him rather than otherwise;—but because there is either real truth in his words, or else so well-feigned a show of truth that no jury can tell the difference. I think it is true. By George, I think he did get the twenty pounds honestly, and that he does not this moment know where he got it. He may have put his finger into my eye; but, if so, why not also into the eyes of a jury?" Then he released his leg, and spoke something of his thoughts aloud.

"It's a sad story," he said; "a very sad story."

"Well, yes, it's sad enough. If you could see my house, you'd say so."

"I haven't a doubt but what you're as innocent as I am." Mr. Toogood, as he said this, felt a little twinge of conscience. He did believe Mr. Crawley to be innocent, but he was not so sure of it as his words would seem to

imply. Nevertheless he repeated the words again;—"as innocent as I am."

"I don't know," said Mr. Crawley. "I don't know. I think I am; but I don't know."

"I believe you are. But you see the case is a very distressing one. A jury has a right to say that the man in possession of a cheque for twenty pounds should account for his possession of it. If I understand the story aright, Mr. Soames will be able to prove that he brought the cheque into your house, and, as far as he knows, never took it out again."

"I suppose so; all the same, if he brought it in, then did he also take it out again."

"I am saying what he will prove,—or, in other words, what he will state upon oath. You can't contradict him. You can't get into the box to do it,—even if that would be of any avail; and I am glad that you cannot, as it would be of no avail. And you can put no one else into the box who can do so."

"No; no."

"That is to say, we think you cannot do so. People can do so many things that they don't think they can do; and can't do so many things that they think that they can do! When will the dean be home?"

"I don't know."

"Before the trial?"

"I don't know. I have no idea."

"It's almost a toss-up whether he'd do more harm or good if he were there."

"I wish he might be there if he has anything to say, whether it might be for harm or good."

"And Mrs. Arabin;—she is with him?"

"They tell me she is not. She is in Europe. He is in Palestine."

"In Palestine, is he?"

"So they tell me. A dean can go where he likes. He has no cure of souls to stand in the way of his pleasures."

"He hasn't,—hasn't he? I wish I were a dean; that is, if I were not a lawyer. Might I write a line to the dean,—and to Mrs. Dean, if it seemed fit? You wouldn't mind that? As you have come to see your cousin at last,—and very glad I am that you have,—you must leave him a little discretion. I won't say anything I oughtn't to say." Mr. Crawley opposed this scheme for some time, but at last consented to the proposition. "And I'll tell you what, Mr. Crawley; I am very fond of cathedrals, I am indeed; and I have long wanted to see Barchester. There's a very fine what-you-may-call-em; isn't there? Well; I'll just run down at the assizes. We have nothing to do in London when the judges are in the country,—of course." Mr. Toogood looked into Mr. Crawley's eyes as he said this, to see if his iniquity were detected, but the perpetual curate was altogether innocent in these matters. "Yes; I'll just run down for a mouthful of fresh air. Of course I shan't open my mouth in court. But I might say one word to the dean, if he's there;—and one word to Mr. Soames. Who is conducting the prosecution?" Mr. Crawley said that Mr. Walker was doing so. "Walker, Walker, Walker? oh,—yes; Walker and Winthrop, isn't it? A decent sort of man, I suppose?"

"I have heard nothing to his discredit, Mr. Toogood."

"And that's saying a great deal for a lawyer. Well, Mr. Crawley, if nothing else comes out between this and that,—nothing, that is, that shall clear your memory about that unfortunate bit of paper, you must simply tell your story to the jury as you've told it to me. I don't think any twelve men in England would convict you;—I don't indeed."

"You think they would not?"

"Of course I've only heard one side, Mr. Crawley."

"No,—no,—no, that is true."

"But judging as well as I can judge from one side, I don't think a jury can convict you. At any rate I'll see you at Barchester, and I'll write a line or two before the trial, just to find out anything that can be found out. And you're

sure you won't come and take a bit of mutton with us in the Square? The girls would be delighted to see you, and so would Maria." Mr. Crawley said that he was quite sure he could not do that, and then having tendered reiterated thanks to his new friend in words which were touching in spite of their old-fashioned gravity, he took his leave, and walked back again to the public-house at Paddington.

He returned home to Hogglestock on the same afternoon, reaching that place at nine in the evening. During the whole of the day after leaving Raymond's Buildings he was thinking of the lawyer, and of the words which the lawyer had spoken. Although he had been disposed to quarrel with Mr. Toogood on many points, although he had been more than once disgusted by the attorney's bad taste, shocked by his low morality, and almost insulted by his easy familiarity, still, when the interview was over, he liked the attorney. When first Mr. Toogood had begun to talk, he regretted very much that he had subjected himself to the necessity of discussing his private affairs with such a windbag of a man; but when he left the chamber he trusted Mr. Toogood altogether, and was very glad that he had sought his aid. He was tired and exhausted when he reached home, as he had eaten nothing but a biscuit or two since his breakfast; but his wife got him food and tea, and then asked him as to his success. "Was my cousin kind to you?"

"Very kind,—more than kind,—perhaps somewhat too pressing in his kindness. But I find no fault. God forbid that I should. He is, I think, a good man, and certainly has been good to me."

"And what is to be done?"

"He will write to the dean."

"I am glad of that."

"And he will be at Barchester."

"Thank God for that."

"But not as my lawyer."

"Nevertheless, I thank God that some one will be there who will know how to give you assistance and advice."

CHAPTER XXXIII

The Plumstead Foxes

THE letters had been brought into the breakfast-parlour at Plumstead Rectory one morning, and the archdeacon had inspected them all, and then thrown over to his wife her share of the spoil,—as was the custom of the house. As to most of Mrs. Grantly's letters, he never made any further inquiry. To letters from her sister, the dean's wife, he was profoundly indifferent, and rarely made any inquiry as to those which were directed in writing with which he was not familiar. But there were others as to which, as Mrs. Grantly knew, he would be sure to ask her questions if she did not show them. No note ever reached her from Lady Hartletop as to which he was not curious, and yet Lady Hartletop's notes very seldom contained much that was of interest. Now, on this morning, there came a letter which, as a matter of course, Mrs. Grantly read at breakfast, and which, she knew, would not be allowed to disappear without inquiry. Nor, indeed, did she wish to keep the letter from her husband. It was too important to be so treated. But she would have been glad to gain time to think in what spirit she would discuss the contents of the letter,—if only such time might be allowed to her. But the archdeacon would allow her no time. "What does Henry say, my dear?" he asked, before the breakfast things had been taken away.

"What does he say? Well; he says——. I'll give you his letter to read by-and-by."

"And why not now?"

"I thought I'd read it again myself, first."

"But if you have read it, I suppose you know what's in it?"

"Not very clearly, as yet. However, there it is." She knew very well that when she had once been asked for it,

no peace would be allowed to her till he had seen it. And, alas! there was not much probability of peace in the house for some time after he should see it.

The archdeacon read the three or four first lines in silence,—and then he burst out. "He has, has he? Then, by heavens——"

"Stop, dearest; stop," said his wife, rising from her chair and coming over to him; "do not say words which you will surely repent."

"I will say words which shall make him repent. He shall never have from me a son's portion."

"Do not make threats in anger. Do not! You know that it is wrong. If he has offended you, say nothing about it,—even to yourself,—as to threatened punishments, till you can judge of the offence in cool blood."

"I am cool," said the archdeacon.

"No, my dear; no; you are angry. And you have not even read his letter through."

"I will read his letter."

"You will see that the marriage is not imminent. It may be that even yet it will never take place. The young lady has refused him."

"Psha!"

"You will see that she has done so. He tells us so himself. And she has behaved very properly."

"Why has she refused him?"

"There can be no doubt about the reason. She feels that, with this charge hanging over her father, she is not in a position to become the wife of any gentleman. You cannot but respect her for that."

Then the archdeacon finished his son's letter, uttering sundry interjections and ejaculations as he did so.

"Of course; I knew it. I understood it all," he said at last. "I've nothing to do with the girl. I don't care whether she be good or bad."

"Oh, my dear!"

"I care not at all,—with reference to my own concerns.

Of course I would wish that the daughter of a neighbouring clergyman,—that the daughter of any neighbour,—that the daughter of any one whatsoever,—should be good rather than bad. But as regards Henry and me, and our mutual relation, her goodness can make no difference. Let her be another Grizel, and still such a marriage must estrange him from me, and me from him."

"But she has refused him."

"Yes; and what does he say?—that he has told her that he will not accept her refusal. Of course we know what it all means. The girl I am not judging. The girl I will not judge. But my own son, to whom I have ever done a father's duty with a father's affectionate indulgence,—him I will judge. I have warned him, and he declares himself to be careless of my warning. I shall take no notice of this letter. I shall neither write to him about it, or speak to him about it. But I charge you to write to him, and tell him that if he does this thing he shall not have a child's portion from me. It is not that I will shorten that which would have been his; but he shall have—nothing!" Then, having spoken these words with a solemnity which for the moment silenced his wife, he got up and left the room. He left the room and closed the door, but, before he had gone half the length of the hall towards his own study, he returned and addressed his wife again. "You understand my instructions, I hope?"

"What instructions?"

"That you write to Henry and tell him what I say."

"I will speak again to you about it by-and-by."

"I will speak no more about it,—not a word more. Let there be not a word more said, but oblige me by doing as I ask you."

Then he was again about to leave the room, but she stopped him. "Wait a moment, my dear."

"Why should I wait?"

"That you may listen to me. Surely you will do that, when I ask you. I will write to Henry, of course, if you bid

me; and I will give him your message, whatever it may be; but not to-day, my dear."

"Why not to-day?"

"Because the sun shall go down upon your wrath before I become its messenger. If you choose to write to-day yourself, I cannot help it. I cannot hinder you. If I am to write to him on your behalf I will take my instructions from you to-morrow morning. When to-morrow morning comes you will not be angry with me because of the delay."

The archdeacon was by no means satisfied; but he knew his wife too well, and himself too well, and the world too well, to insist on the immediate gratification of his passion. Over his bosom's mistress he did exercise a certain marital control,—which was, for instance, quite sufficiently fixed to enable him to look down with thorough contempt on such a one as Bishop Proudie; but he was not a despot who could exact a passive obedience to every fantasy. His wife would not have written the letter for him on that day, and he knew very well that she would not do so. He knew also that she was right;—and yet he regretted his want of power. His anger at the present moment was very hot,—so hot that he wished to wreak it. He knew that it would cool before the morrow;—and, no doubt, knew also theoretically, that it would be most fitting that it should cool. But not the less was it a matter of regret to him that so much good hot anger should be wasted, and that he could not have his will of his disobedient son while it lasted. He might, no doubt, have written himself, but to have done so would not have suited him. Even in his anger he could not have written to his son without using the ordinary terms of affection, and in his anger he could not bring himself to use those terms. "You will find that I shall be of the same mind to-morrow,—exactly," he said to his wife. "I have resolved about it long since; and it is not likely that I shall change in a day." Then he went out, about his parish, intending to continue to think of his son's iniquity, so that he might keep his anger hot,—red hot. Then he

remembered that the evening would come, and that he would say his prayers; and he shook his head in regret,—in a regret of which he was only half conscious, though it was very keen, and which he did not attempt to analyze,—as he reflected that his rage would hardly be able to survive that ordeal. How common with us it is to repine that the devil is not stronger over us than he is.

The archdeacon, who was a very wealthy man, had purchased a property in Plumstead, contiguous to the glebe-land, and had thus come to exercise in the parish the double duty of rector and squire. And of this estate in Barsetshire, which extended beyond the confines of Plumstead into the neighbouring parish of Eiderdown, and which comprised also an outlying farm in the parish of Stogpingum,—Stoke Pinguium would have been the proper name had not barbarous Saxon tongues clipped it of its proper proportions,—he had always intended that his son Charles should enjoy the inheritance. There was other property, both in land and in money, for his elder son, and other again for the maintenance of his wife,—for the archdeacon's father had been for many years Bishop of Barchester, and such a bishopric as that of Barchester had been in those days was worth money. Of his intention in this respect he had never spoken in plain language to either of his sons; but the major had for the last year or two enjoyed the shooting of the Barsetshire covers, giving what orders he pleased about the game; and the father had encouraged him to take something like the management of the property into his hands. There might be some fifteen hundred acres of it altogether, and the archdeacon had rejoiced over it with his wife scores of times, saying that there was many a squire in the county whose elder son would never find himself half so well placed as would his own younger son. Now there was a string of narrow woods called Plumstead Coppices which ran from a point near the church right across the parish, dividing the archdeacon's land from the Ullathorne estate, and these cop-

'A strip of narrow woods'

pices, or belts of woodland, belonged to the archdeacon. On the morning of which we are speaking, the archdeacon, mounted on his cob, still thinking of his son's iniquity and of his own fixed resolve to punish him as he had said that he would punish him, opened with his whip a woodland gate, from which a green muddy lane led through the trees up to the house of his gamekeeper. The man's wife was ill, and in his ordinary way of business the archdeacon was about to call and ask after her health. At the door of the cottage he found the man, who was woodman as well as gamekeeper, and was responsible for fences and faggots, as well as for foxes and pheasants' eggs.

"How's Martha, Flurry?" said the archdeacon.

"Thanking your reverence, she be a deal improved since the mistress was here,—last Tuesday it was, I think."

"I'm glad of that. It was only rheumatism, I suppose?"

"Just a tich of fever with it, your reverence, the doctor said."

"Tell her I was asking after it. I won't mind getting down to-day, as I am rather busy. She has had what she wanted from the house?"

"The mistress has been very good in that way. She always is, God bless her!"

"Good-day to you, Flurry. I'll ask Mr. Sims to come and read to her a bit this afternoon, or to-morrow morning." The archdeacon kept two curates, and Mr. Sims was one of them.

"She'll take it very kindly, your reverence. But while you are here, sir, there's just a word I'd like to say. I didn't happen to catch Mr. Henry when he was here the other day."

"Never mind Mr. Henry; what is it you have to say?"

"I do think, I do indeed, sir, that Mr. Thorne's man ain't dealing fairly along of the foxes. I wouldn't say a word about it, only that Mr. Henry is so particular."

"What about the foxes? What is he doing with the foxes?"

"Well, sir, he's a trapping on 'em. He is, indeed, your reverence. I wouldn't speak if I warn't well nigh mortial sure."

Now the archdeacon had never been a hunting man, though in his early days many a clergyman had been in the habit of hunting without losing his clerical character by doing so; but he had lived all his life among gentlemen in a hunting county, and had his own very strong ideas about the trapping of foxes. Foxes first, and pheasants afterwards, had always been the rule with him as to any land of which he himself had had the management. And no man understood better than he did how to deal with keepers as to this matter of fox-preserving, or knew better that keepers will in truth obey not the words of their employers, but their sympathies. "Wish them to have foxes, and pay them, and they will have them," Mr. Sowerby of Chaldicotes used to say, and he in his day was reckoned to be the best preserver of foxes in Barsetshire. "Tell them to have them, and don't wish it, and pay them well, and you won't have a fox to interfere with your game. I don't care what a man says to me, I can read it all like a book when I see his covers drawn." That was what poor Mr. Sowerby of Chaldicotes used to say, and the archdeacon had heard him say it a score of times, and had learned the lesson. But now his heart was not with the foxes,—and especially not with the foxes on behalf of his son Henry. "I can't have any meddling with Mr. Thorne," he said; "I can't, and I won't."

"But I don't suppose it can be Mr. Thorne's order, your reverence; and Mr. Henry is so particular."

"Of course it isn't Mr. Thorne's order. Mr. Thorne has been a hunting man all his life."

"But he have guv' up now, your reverence. He ain't a hunted these two years."

"I'm sure he wouldn't have the foxes trapped."

"Not if he knowed it, he wouldn't, your reverence. A gentleman of the likes of him, who's been a hunting over fifty year, wouldn't do the likes of that; but the foxes is

trapped, and Mr. Henry 'll be a putting it on me if I don't speak out. They is Plumstead foxes, too; and a vixen was trapped just across the field yonder, in Goshall Springs, no later than yesterday morning." Flurry was now thoroughly in earnest; and, indeed, the trapping of a vixen in February is a serious thing.

"Goshall Springs don't belong to me," said the archdeacon.

"No, your reverence; they're on the Ullathorne property. But a word from your reverence would do it. Mr. Henry thinks more of the foxes than anything. The last word he told me was that it would break his heart if he saw the coppices drawn blank."

"Then he must break his heart." The words were pronounced, but the archdeacon had so much command over himself as to speak them in such a voice that the man should not hear them. But it was incumbent on him to say something that the man should hear. "I will have no meddling in the matter, Flurry. Whether there are foxes or whether there are not, is matter of no great moment. I will not have a word said to annoy Mr. Thorne." Then he rode away, back through the wood and out on to the road, and the horse walked with him leisurely on, whither the archdeacon hardly knew,—for he was thinking, thinking, thinking. "Well;—if that ain't the darn'dest thing that ever was," said Flurry; "but I'll tell the squire about Thorne's man,—darned if I don't." Now "the squire" was young Squire Gresham, the master of the East Barsetshire hounds.

But the archdeacon went on thinking, thinking, thinking. He could have heard nothing of his son to stir him more in his favour than this strong evidence of his partiality for foxes. I do not mean it to be understood that the archdeacon regarded foxes as better than active charity, or a contented mind, or a meek spirit, or than self-denying temperance. No doubt all these virtues did hold in his mind their proper places, altogether beyond contamina-

tion of foxes. But he had prided himself on thinking that his son should be a country gentleman, and, probably nothing doubting as to the major's active charity and other virtues, was delighted to receive evidence of those tastes which he had ever wished to encourage in his son's character. Or rather, such evidence would have delighted him at any other time than the present. Now it only added more gall to his cup. "Why should he teach himself to care for such things, when he has not the spirit to enjoy them," said the archdeacon to himself. "He is a fool,—a fool. A man that has been married once, to go crazy after a little girl, that has hardly a dress to her back, and who never was in a drawing-room in her life! Charles is the eldest, and he shall be the eldest. It will be better to keep it together. It is the way in which the country has become what it is." He was out nearly all day, and did not see his wife till dinner-time. Her father, Mr. Harding, was still with them, but had breakfasted in his own room. Not a word, therefore, was said about Henry Grantly between the father and mother on that evening.

Mrs. Grantly was determined that, unless provoked, she would say nothing to him till the following morning. He should sleep upon his wrath before she spoke to him again. And he was equally unwilling to recur to the subject. Had she permitted it, the next morning would have passed away, and no word would have been spoken. But this would not have suited her. She had his orders to write, and she had undertaken to obey these orders,—with the delay of one day. Were she not to write at all,—or in writing to send no message from the father, there would be cause for further anger. And yet this, I think, was what the archdeacon wished.

"Archdeacon," she said, "I shall write to Henry to-day."

"Very well."

"And what am I to say from you?"

"I told you yesterday what are my intentions."

"I am not asking about that now. We hope there will be

years and years to come, in which you may change them, and shape them as you will. What shall I tell him now from you?"

"I have nothing to say to him,—nothing; not a word. He knows what he has to expect from me, for I have told him. He is acting with his eyes open, and so am I. If he marries Miss Crawley, he must live on his own means. I told him that myself so plainly, that he can want no further intimation." Then Mrs. Grantly knew that she was absolved from the burden of yesterday's message, and she plumed herself on the prudence of her conduct. On the same morning the archdeacon wrote the following note:—

"DEAR THORNE,—

"My man tells me that foxes have been trapped on Darvell's farm, just outside the coppices. I know nothing of it myself, but I am sure you'll look to it.

"Yours always,

"T. GRANTLY."

CHAPTER XXXIV

Mrs. Proudie sends for her Lawyer

THERE was great dismay in Barchester Palace after the visit paid to the bishop and Mrs. Proudie by that terrible clerical offender, Mr. Crawley. It will be remembered, perhaps, how he had defied the bishop with spoken words, and how he had defied the bishop's wife by speaking no words to her. For the moment, no doubt, Mr. Crawley had the best of it. Mrs. Proudie acknowledged to herself that this was the case; but as she was a woman who had never yet succumbed to an enemy, who had never,—if on such an occasion I may be allowed to use a schoolboy's slang,—taken a licking from any one, it was not likely that Mr. Crawley would be long allowed to enjoy his triumph

in peace. It would be odd if all the weight of the palace would not be able to silence a wretch of a perpetual curate who had already been committed to take his trial for thieving;—and Mrs. Proudie was determined that all the weight of the palace should be used. As for the bishop, though he was not as angry as his wife, he was quite as unhappy, and therefore quite as hostile to Mr. Crawley; and was fully conscious that there could be no peace for him now until Mr. Crawley should be crushed. If only the assizes would come at once, and get him condemned out of the way, what a blessed thing it would be! But unluckily it still wanted three months to the assizes, and during those three months Mr. Crawley would be at large and subject only to episcopal authority. During that time he could not be silenced by the arm of the civil law. His wife was not long in expressing her opinion after Mr. Crawley had left the palace. "You must proceed against him in the Court of Arches,—and that at once," said Mrs. Proudie. "You can do that, of course? I know that it will be expensive. Of course it will be expensive. I suppose it may cost us some hundreds of pounds; but duty is duty, my lord, and in such a case as this your duty as a bishop is paramount."

The poor bishop knew that it was useless to explain to her the various mistakes which she made,—which she was ever making,—as to the extent of his powers and the modes of procedure which were open to him. When he would do so she would only rail at him for being lukewarm in his office, poor in spirit, and afraid of dealing roundly with those below him. On the present occasion he did say a word, but she would not even hear him to the end. "Don't tell me about rural deans, as if I didn't know. The rural dean has nothing to do with such a case. The man has been committed for trial. Send for Mr. Chadwick at once, and let steps be taken before you are an hour older."

"But, my dear, Mr. Chadwick can do nothing."

"Then I will see Mr. Chadwick." And in her anger she

did sit down and write a note to Mr. Chadwick, begging him to come over to her at the palace.

Mr. Chadwick was a lawyer, living in Barchester, who earned his bread from ecclesiastical business. His father, and his uncle, and his grandfather and granduncles, had all been concerned in the affairs of the diocese of Barchester. His uncle had been bailiff to the episcopal estates, or steward as he had been called, in Bishop Grantly's time, and still contrived to draw his income in some shape from the property of the see. The nephew had also been the legal assistant of the bishop in his latter days, and had been continued in that position by Bishop Proudie, not from love, but from expediency. Mr. John Chadwick was one of those gentlemen, two or three of whom are to be seen in connection with every see,—who seem to be hybrids—half-lay, half-cleric. They dress like clergymen, and affect that mixture of clerical solemnity and clerical waggishness which is generally to be found among minor canons and vicar chorals of a cathedral. They live, or at least have their offices, half in the Close and half out of it,—dwelling as it were just on the borders of holy orders. They always wear white neck-handkerchiefs and black gloves; and would be altogether clerical in their appearance, were it not that as regards the outward man they impinge somewhat on the characteristics of the undertaker. They savour of the church, but the savour is of the church's exterior. Any stranger thrown into chance contact with one of them would, from instinct, begin to talk of things ecclesiastical without any reference to things theological or things religious. They are always most worthy men, much respected in the society of the Close, and I never heard of one of them whose wife was not comfortable or whose children were left without provision.

Such a one was Mr. John Chadwick, and as it was a portion of his duties to accompany the bishop to consecrations and ordinations, he knew Dr. Proudie very well. Having been brought up, as it were, under the very wing

of Bishop Grantly, it could not well be that he should love Bishop Grantly's successor. The old bishop and the new bishop had been so different that no man could like, or even esteem, them both. But Mr. Chadwick was a prudent man, who knew well the source from which he earned his bread, and he had never quarrelled with Bishop Proudie. He knew Mrs. Proudie also,—of necessity,—and when I say of him that he had hitherto avoided any open quarrel with her, it will I think be allowed that he was a man of prudence and sagacity.

But he had sometimes been sorely tried, and he felt when he got her note that he was now about to encounter a very sore trial. He muttered something which might have been taken for an oath, were it not that the outward signs of the man gave warranty that no oath could proceed from such a one. Then he wrote a short note presenting his compliments to Mrs. Proudie, and saying that he would call at the palace at eleven o'clock on the following morning.

But, in the meantime, Mrs. Proudie, who could not be silent on the subject for a moment, did learn something of the truth from her husband. The information did not come to her in the way of instruction, but was teased out of the unfortunate man. "I know that you can proceed against him in the Court of Arches, under the 'Church Discipline Act,' " she said.

"No, my dear; no;" said the bishop, shaking his head in his misery.

"Or in the Consistorial Court. It's all the same thing."

"There must be an inquiry first,—by his brother clergy. There must indeed. It's the only way of proceeding."

"But there has been an inquiry, and he has been committed."

"That doesn't signify, my dear. That's the Civil Law."

"And if the Civil Law condemns him, and locks him up in prison;—as it most certainly will do?"

"But it hasn't done so yet, my dear. I really think that as

it has gone so far, it will be best to leave it as it is till he has taken his trial."

"What; leave him there after what occurred this morning in this palace?" The palace with Mrs. Proudie was always a palace, and never a house. "No; no; ten thousand times, no. Are you not aware that he insulted you, and grossly, most grossly insulted me? I was never treated with such insolence by any clergyman before, since I first came to this palace;—never, never. And we know the man to be a thief;—we absolutely know it. Think, my lord, of the souls of his people!"

"Oh, dear; oh, dear; oh, dear," said the bishop.

"Why do you fret yourself in that way?"

"Because you will get me into trouble. I tell you the only thing to be done is to issue a commission with the rural dean at the head of it."

"Then issue a commission."

"And they will take three months."

"Why should they take three months. Why should they take more than three days,—or three hours. It is all plain sailing."

"These things are never plain sailing, my dear. When a bishop has to oppose any of his clergy, it is always made as difficult as possible."

"More shame for them who make it so."

"But it is so. If I were to take legal proceedings against him, it would cost,—oh, dear,—more than a thousand pounds, I should say."

"If it costs two, you must do it." Mrs. Proudie's anger was still very hot, or she would not have spoken of an unremunerative outlay of money in such language as that.

In this manner she did come to understand, before the arrival of Mr. Chadwick, that her husband could take no legal steps towards silencing Mr. Crawley until a commission of clergymen had been appointed to inquire into the matter, and that that commission should be headed by the rural dean within the limits of whose rural deanery the

parish of Hogglestock was situated, or by some beneficed parochial clergyman of repute in the neighbourhood. Now the rural dean was Dr. Tempest of Silverbridge,—who had held that position before the coming of Dr. Proudie to the diocese; and there had grown up in the bosom of Mrs. Proudie a strong feeling that undue mercy had been shown to Mr. Crawley by the magistrates of Silverbridge, of whom Dr. Tempest had been one. "These magistrates had taken bail for his appearance at the assizes, instead of committing him to prison at once,—as they were bound to do, when such an offence as that had been committed by a clergyman. But, no;—even though there was a clergyman among them, they had thought nothing of the souls of the poor people!" In such language Mrs. Proudie had spoken of the affair at Silverbridge, and having once committed herself to such an opinion, of course she thought that Dr. Tempest would go through fire and water,—would omit no stretch of what little judicial power might be committed to his hands,—with the view of opposing his bishop and maintaining the culprit in his position. "In such a case as this, can not you name an acting rural dean yourself? Dr. Tempest, you know, is very old." "No, my dear; no; I cannot." "You can ask Mr. Chadwick, at any rate, and then you could name Mr. Thumble." "But Mr. Thumble doesn't even hold a living in the diocese. Oh, dear; oh, dear; oh, dear!" And so the matter rested until Mr. Chadwick came.

Mrs. Proudie had no doubt intended to have Mr. Chadwick all to herself,—at any rate so to encounter him in the first instance. But having been at length convinced that the inquiry by the rural dean was really necessary as a preliminary, and having also slept upon the question of expenditure, she gave directions that the lawyer should be shown into the bishop's study, and she took care to be absent at the moment of his arrival. Of course she did not intend that Mr. Chadwick should leave the palace without having heard what she had to say, but she thought that it

would be well that he should be made to conceive that though the summons had been written by her, it had really been intended on the part of the bishop. "Mr. Chadwick will be with you at eleven, bishop," she said, as she got up from the breakfast-table, at which she left his lordship with two of his daughters and with a married son-in-law, a clergyman who was staying in the house. "Very well, my dear," said the bishop, with a smile,—for he was anxious not to betray any vexation at his wife's interference before his daughters or the Rev. Mr. Tickler. But he understood it all. Mr. Chadwick had been sent for with reference to Mr. Crawley, and he was driven,—absolutely driven, to propose to his lawyer that this commission of inquiry should be issued.

Punctually at eleven Mr. Chadwick came, wearing a very long face as he entered the palace door,—for he felt that he would in all probability be now compelled to quarrel with Mrs. Proudie. Much he could bear, but there was a limit to his endurance. She had never absolutely sent for him before, though she had often interfered with him. "I shall have to tell her a bit of my mind," he said, as he stepped across the Close, habited in his best suit of black, with most exact white cravat, and yet looking not quite like a clergyman,—with some touch of the undertaker in his gait. When he found that he was shown into the bishop's room, and that the bishop was there,—and the bishop only,—his mind was relieved. It would have been better that the bishop should have written himself, or that the chaplain should have written in his lordship's name; that, however, was a trifle.

But the bishop did not know what to say to him. If he intended to direct an inquiry to be made by the rural dean, it would be by no means becoming that he should consult Mr. Chadwick as to doing so. It might be well, or if not well at any rate not improper, that he should make the application to Dr. Tempest through Mr. Chadwick; but in that case he must give the order at once, and he still wished to

avoid it if it were possible. Since he had been in the diocese no case so grave as this had been pushed upon him. The intervention of the rural dean in an ordinary way he had used,—had been made to use,—more than once, by his wife. A vicar had been absent a little too long from one parish, and there had been rumours about brandy-and-water in another. Once he had been very nearly in deep water because Mrs. Proudie had taken it in dudgeon that a certain young rector, who had been left a widower, had a very pretty governess for his children; and there had been that case, sadly notorious in the diocese at the time, of our excellent friend Mr. Robarts of Framley, when the bailiffs were in his house because he couldn't pay his debts,—or rather, the debts of his friend for whom he had signed bills. But in all these cases some good fortune had intervened, and he had been saved from the terrible necessity of any ulterior process. But now,—now he was being driven beyond himself, and all to no purpose. If Mrs. Proudie would only wait three months the civil law would do it all for him. But here was Mr. Chadwick in the room, and he knew that it would be useless for him to attempt to talk to Mr. Chadwick about other matters, and so dismiss him. The wife of his bosom would be down upon them before Chadwick could be out of the room.

"H—m—ha. How d'ye do, Mr. Chadwick—won't you sit down?" Mr. Chadwick thanked his lordship, and sat down. "It's very cold, isn't it, Mr. Chadwick?"

"A hard frost, my lord, but a beautiful day."

"Won't you come near the fire?" The bishop knew that Mrs. Proudie was on the road, and had an eye to the proper strategical position of his forces. Mrs. Proudie would certainly take up her position in a certain chair from whence the light enabled her to rake her husband thoroughly. What advantage she might have from this he could not prevent;—but he could so place Mr. Chadwick, that the lawyer should be more within the reach of his eye than that of his wife. So the bishop pointed to an arm-chair

opposite to himself and near the fire, and Mr. Chadwick seated himself accordingly.

"This is a very sad affair about Mr. Crawley," said the bishop.

"Very sad indeed," said the lawyer. "I never pitied a man so much in my life, my lord."

This was not exactly the line which the bishop was desirous of taking. "Of course he is to be pitied;—of course he is. But from all I hear, Mr. Chadwick, I am afraid,—I am afraid we must not acquit him."

"As to that, my lord, he has to stand his trial, of course."

"But, you see, Mr. Chadwick, regarding him as a beneficed clergyman,—with a cure of souls,—the question is whether I should be justified in leaving him where he is till his trial shall come on."

"Of course your lordship knows best about that, but——"

"I know there is a difficulty. I know that. But I am inclined to think that in the interests of the parish I am bound to issue a commission of inquiry."

"I believe your lordship has attempted to silence him, and that he has refused to comply."

"I thought it better for everybody's sake,—especially for his own, that he should for a while be relieved from his duties; but he is an obstinate man, a very obstinate man. I made the attempt with all consideration for his feelings."

"He is hard put to it, my lord. I know the man and his pride. The dean has spoken of him to me more than once, and nobody knows him so well as the dean. If I might venture to offer an opinion——"

"Good morning, Mr. Chadwick," said Mrs. Proudie, coming into the room and taking her accustomed seat. "No thank you, no; I will stay away from the fire, if you please. His lordship has spoken to you no doubt about this unfortunate, wretched man?"

"We are speaking of him now, my dear."

"Something must of course be done to put a stop to the

crying disgrace of having such a man preaching from a pulpit in this diocese. When I think of the souls of the people in that poor village, my hair literally stands on end. And then he is disobedient!"

"That is the worst of it," said the bishop. "It would have been so much better for himself if he would have allowed me to provide quietly for the services till the trial be over."

"I could have told you, my lord, that he would not do that, from what I knew of him," said Mr. Chadwick.

"But he must do it," said Mrs. Proudie. "He must be made to do it."

"His lordship will find it difficult," said Mr. Chadwick.

"I can issue a commission, you know, to the rural dean," said the bishop mildly.

"Yes, you can do that. And Dr. Tempest in two months' time will have named his assessors——"

"Dr. Tempest must not name them; the bishop must name them," said Mrs. Proudie.

"It is customary to leave that to the rural dean," said Mr. Chadwick. "The bishop no doubt can object to any one named."

"And can specially select any clergyman he pleases from the archdeaconry," said the bishop. "I have known it done."

"The rural dean in such case has probably been an old man, and not active," said the lawyer.

"And Dr. Tempest is a very old man," said Mrs. Proudie, "and in such a matter not at all trustworthy. He was one of the magistrates who took bail."

"His lordship could hardly set him aside," said the lawyer. "At any rate I would not recommend him to try. I think you might suggest a commission of five, and propose two of the number yourself. I do not think that in such a case Dr. Tempest would raise any question."

At last it was settled in this way. Mr. Chadwick was to prepare a letter to Dr. Tempest, for the bishop's signature,

in which the doctor should be requested, as the rural dean to whom Mr. Crawley was subject, to hold a commission of five to inquire into Mr. Crawley's conduct. The letter was to explain to Dr. Tempest that the bishop, moved by his solicitude for the souls of the people of Hogglestock, had endeavoured, "in a friendly way," to induce Mr. Crawley to desist from his ministrations; but that having failed through Mr. Crawley's obstinacy, he had no alternative but to proceed in this way. "You had better say that his lordship, as bishop of the diocese, can take no heed of the coming trial," said Mrs. Proudie. "I think his lordship had better say nothing at all about the trial," said Mr. Chadwick. "I think that will be best," said the bishop.

"But if they report against him," said Mr. Chadwick, "you can only then proceed in the ecclesiastical court,—at your own expense."

"He'll hardly be so obstinate as that," said the bishop.

"I'm afraid you don't know him, my lord," said the lawyer. The bishop, thinking of the scene which had taken place in that very room only yesterday, felt that he did know Mr. Crawley, and felt also that the hope which he had just expressed was one in which he himself put no trust. But something might turn up; and it was devoutly to be hoped that Dr. Tempest would take a long time over his inquiry. The assizes might come on as soon as it was terminated, or very shortly afterwards; and then everything might be well. "You won't find Dr. Tempest very ready at it," said Mr. Chadwick. The bishop in his heart was comforted by the words. "But he must be made to be ready to do his duty," said Mrs. Proudie, imperiously. Mr. Chadwick shrugged his shoulders, then got up, spoke his farewell little speeches, and left the palace.

CHAPTER XXXV

Lily Dale writes Two Words in her Book

JOHN EAMES saw nothing more of Lily Dale till he packed up his portmanteau, left his mother's house, and went to stay for a few days with his old friend Lady Julia; and this did not happen till he had been above a week at Guestwick. Mrs. Dale repeatedly said that it was odd that Johnny did not come to see them; and Grace, speaking of him to Lily, asked why he did not come. Lily, in her funny way, declared that he would come soon enough. But even while she was joking there was something of half-expressed consciousness in her words,—as though she felt it to be foolish to speak of his coming as she might of that of any other young man, before people who knew her whole story. "He'll come quick enough. He knows, and I know, that his coming will do no good. Of course I shall be glad to see him. Why shouldn't I be glad to see him? I've known him and liked him all my life. I liked him when there did not seem to be much about him to like, and now that he is clever, and agreeable, and good-looking, —which he never was as a lad,—why shouldn't I go on liking him? He's more like a brother to me than anybody else I've got. James,"—James was her brother-in-law, Dr. Crofts,—"thinks of nothing but his patients and his babies, and my cousin Bernard is much too grand a person for me to take the liberty of loving him. I shall be very glad to see Johnny Eames." From all which Mrs. Dale was led to believe that Johnny's case was still hopeless. And how should it not be hopeless? Had Lily not confessed within the last week or two that she still loved Adolphus Crosbie?

Mrs. Eames also, and Mary, were surprised that John did not go over to Allington. "You haven't seen Mrs. Dale yet, or the squire?" said his mother.

"I shall see them when I am at the cottage."

"Yes;—no doubt. But it seems strange that you should be here so long without going to them."

"There's time enough," said he. "I shall have nothing else to do when I'm at the cottage." Then, when Mary had spoken to him again in private, expressing a hope that there was "nothing wrong," he had been very angry with his sister. "What do you mean by wrong? What rubbish you girls talk! and you never have any delicacy of feeling to make you silent."

"Oh, John, don't say such hard things as that of me!"

"But I do say them. You'll make me swear among you some day that I will never see Lily Dale again. As it is, I wish I never had seen her,—simply because I am so dunned about it." In all of which I think that Johnny was manifestly wrong. When the humour was on him he was fond enough of talking about Lily Dale. Had he not taught her to do so, I doubt whether his sister would ever have mentioned Lily's name to him. "I did not mean to dun you, John," said Mary, meekly.

But at last he went to Lady Julia's, and was no sooner there than he was ready to start for Allington. When Lady Julia spoke to him about Lily, he did not venture to snub her. Indeed, of all his friends, Lady Julia was the one with whom on this subject he allowed himself the most unrestricted confidence. He came over one day, just before dinner, and declared his intention of walking over to Allington immediately after breakfast on the following morning. "It's the last time, Lady Julia," he said.

"So you say, Johnny."

"And so I mean it! What's the good of a man frittering away his life? What's the good of wishing for what you can't get?"

"Jacob was not in such a hurry when he wished for Rachel."

"That was all very well for an old patriarch who had seven or eight hundred years to live."

"My dear John, you forget your Bible. Jacob did not live half as long as that."

"He lived long enough, and slowly enough, to be able to wait fourteen years;—and then he had something to comfort him in the meantime. And after all, Lady Julia, it's more than seven years since I first thought Lily was the prettiest girl I ever saw."

"How old are you now?"

"Twenty-seven,—and she's twenty-four."

"You've time enough yet, if you'll only be patient."

"I'll be patient for to-morrow, Lady Julia, but never again. Not that I mean to quarrel with her. I'm not such a fool as to quarrel with a girl because she can't like me. I know how it all is. If that scoundrel had not come across my path just when he did,—in that very nick of time, all might have been right betwixt her and me. I couldn't have offered to marry her before, when I hadn't as much income as would have found her in bread-and-butter. And then, just as better times came to me, he stepped in! I wonder whether it will be expected of me that I should forgive him?"

"As far as that goes, you have no right to be angry with him."

"But I am,—all the same."

"And so was I,—but not for stepping in, as you call it."

"You and I are different, Lady Julia. I was angry with him for stepping in; but I couldn't show it. Then he stepped out, and I did manage to show it. And now I shouldn't wonder if he doesn't step in again. After all, why should he have such a power? It was simply the nick of time which gave it to him." That John Eames should be able to find some consolation in this consideration is devoutly to be hoped by us all.

There was nothing said about Lily Dale the next morning at breakfast. Lady Julia observed that John was dressed a little more neatly than usual;—though the change

was not such as to have called for her special observation, had she not known the business on which he was intent.

"You have nothing to send to the Dales?" he said, as he got up from the table.

"Nothing but my love, Johnny."

"No worsted or embroidery work,—or a pot of special jam for the squire?"

"No, sir, nothing; though I should like to make you carry a pair of panniers, if I could."

"They would become me well," said Johnny, "for I am going on an ass's errand." Then, without waiting for the word of affection which was on the old woman's lips, he got himself out of the room, and started on his journey.

The walk was only three miles and the weather was dry and frosty, and he had come to the turn leading up to the church and the squire's house almost before he remembered that he was near Allington. Here he paused for a moment to think. If he continued his way down by the "Red Lion" and through Allington Street, he must knock at Mrs. Dale's door, and ask for admission by means of the servant,—as would be done by any ordinary visitor. But he could make his way on to the lawn by going up beyond the wall of the churchyard and through the squire's garden. He knew the path well,—very well; and he thought that he might take so much liberty as that, both with the squire and with Mrs. Dale, although his visits to Allington were not so frequent now as they used to be in the days of his boyhood. He did not wish to be admitted by the servant, and therefore he went through the gardens. Luckily he did not see the squire, who would have detained him, and he escaped from Hopkins, the old gardener, with little more than a word. "I'm going down to see the ladies, Hopkins; I suppose I shall find them?" And then, while Hopkins was arranging his spade so that he might lean upon it for a little chat, Johnny was gone and had made his way into the other garden. He had thought it possible that he might meet Lily out among the walks by herself, and such a

meeting as this would have suited him better than any other. And as he crossed the little bridge which separated the gardens he thought of more than one such meeting,—of one especial occasion on which he had first ventured to tell her in plain words that he loved her. But before that day Crosbie had come there, and at the moment in which he was speaking of his love she regarded Crosbie as an angel of light upon the earth. What hope could there have been for him then? What use was there in his telling such a tale of love at that time? When he told it, he knew that Crosbie had been before him. He knew that Crosbie was at that moment the angel of light. But as he had never before been able to speak of his love, so was he then unable not to speak of it. He had spoken, and of course had been simply rebuked. Since that day Crosbie had ceased to be an angel of light, and he, John Eames, had spoken often. But he had spoken in vain, and now he would speak once again.

He went through the garden and over the lawn belonging to the Small House and saw no one. He forgot, I think, that ladies do not come out to pick roses when the ground is frozen, and that croquet is not often in progress with the hoar-frost on the grass. So he walked up to the little terrace before the drawing-room, and looking in saw Mrs. Dale, and Lily, and Grace at their morning work. Lily was drawing, and Mrs. Dale was writing, and Grace had her needle in her hand. As it happened, no one at first perceived him, and he had time to feel that after all he would have managed better if he had been announced in the usual way. As, however, it was now necessary that he should announce himself, he knocked at the window, and they all immediately looked up and saw him. "It's my cousin John," said Grace. "Oh, Johnny, how are you at last?" said Mrs. Dale. But it was Lily who, without speaking, opened the window for him, who was the first to give him her hand, and who led him through into the room.

"It's a great shame my coming in this way," said John, "and letting all the cold air in upon you."

"We shall survive it," said Mrs. Dale. "I suppose you have just come down from my brother-in-law?"

"No; I have not seen the squire as yet. I will do so before I go back, of course. But it seemed such a commonplace sort of thing to go round by the village."

"We are very glad to see you, by whatever way you come;—are we not, mamma?" said Lily.

"I'm not so sure of that. We were only saying yesterday that as you had been in the country a fortnight without coming to us, we did not think we would be at home when you did come."

"But I have caught you, you see," said Johnny.

And so they went on, chatting of old times and of mutual friends very comfortably for full an hour. And there was some serious conversation about Grace's father and his affairs, and John declared his opinion that Mr. Crawley ought to go to his uncle, Thomas Toogood, not at all knowing at that time that Mr. Crawley himself had come to the same opinion. And John gave them an elaborate description of Sir Raffle Buffle, standing up with his back to the fire with his hat on his head, and speaking with a loud harsh voice, to show them the way in which he declared that that gentleman received his inferiors; and then bowing and scraping and rubbing his hands together and simpering with would-be softness,—declaring that after that fashion Sir Raffle received his superiors. And they were very merry,—so that no one would have thought that Johnny was a despondent lover, now bent on throwing the dice for his last stake; or that Lily was aware that she was in the presence of one lover, and that she was like to fall to the ground between two stools,—having two lovers, neither of whom could serve her turn.

"How can you consent to serve him if he's such a man as that?" said Lily, speaking of Sir Raffle.

"I do not serve him. I serve the Queen,—or rather the public. I don't take his wages, and he does not play his tricks with me. He knows that he can't. He has tried it, and

has failed. And he only keeps me where I am because I've had some money left me. He thinks it fine to have a private secretary with a fortune. I know that he tells people all manner of lies about it, making it out to be five times as much as it is. Dear old Huffle Snuffle. He is such an ass; and yet he's had wit enough to get to the top of the tree, and to keep himself there. He began the world without a penny. Now he has got a handle to his name, and he'll live in clover all his life. It's very odd, isn't it, Mrs. Dale?"

"I suppose he does his work?"

"When men get so high as that, there's no knowing whether they work or whether they don't. There isn't much for them to do, as far as I can see. They have to look beautiful, and frighten the young ones."

"And does Sir Raffle look beautiful?" Lily asked.

"After a fashion, he does. There is something imposing about such a man till you're used to it, and can see through it. Of course it's all padding. There are men who work, no doubt. But among the bigwigs, and bishops and cabinet ministers, I fancy that the looking beautiful is the chief part of it. Dear me, you don't mean to say it's luncheon time?"

But it was luncheon time, and not only had he not as yet said a word of all that which he had come to say, but had not as yet made any move towards getting it said. How was he to arrange that Lily should be left alone with him? Lady Julia had said that she should not expect him back till dinner-time, and he had answered her lackadaisically, "I don't suppose I shall be there above ten minutes. Ten minutes will say all I've got to say, and do all I've got to do. And then I suppose I shall go and cut names about upon bridges,—eh, Lady Julia?" Lady Julia understood his words; for once, upon a former occasion, she had found him cutting Lily's name on the rail of a wooden bridge in her brother's grounds. But he had now been a couple of hours at the Small House, and had not said a word of that which he had come to say.

"Are you going to walk out with us after lunch?" said Lily.

"He will have had walking enough," said Mrs. Dale.

"We'll convoy him back part of the way," said Lily.

"I'm not going yet," said Johnny, "unless you turn me out."

"But we must have our walk before it is dark," said Lily.

"You might go up with him to your uncle," said Mrs. Dale. "Indeed, I promised to go up myself, and so did you, Grace, to see the microscope. I heard Mr. Dale give orders that one of those long-legged reptiles should be caught on purpose for your inspection."

Mrs. Dale's little scheme for bringing the two together was very transparent, but it was not the less wise on that account. Schemes will often be successful, let them be ever so transparent. Little intrigues become necessary, not to conquer unwilling people, but people who are willing enough, who, nevertheless, cannot give way except under the machinations of an intrigue.

"I don't think I'll mind looking at the long-legged creature to-day," said Johnny.

"I must go, of course," said Grace.

Lily said nothing at the moment, either about the long-legged creature or the walk. That which must be, must be. She knew well why John Eames had come there. She knew that the visits to his mother and to Lady Julia would never have been made, but that he might have this interview. And he had a right to demand, at any rate, as much as that. That which must be, must be. And therefore when both Mrs. Dale and Grace stoutly maintained their purpose of going up to the squire, Lily neither attempted to persuade John to accompany them, nor said that she would do so herself.

"I will convoy you home myself," she said, "and Grace, when she has done with the beetle, shall come and meet me. Won't you, Grace?"

"Certainly."

"We are not helpless young ladies in these parts, nor yet timorous," continued Lily. "We can walk about without being afraid of ghosts, robbers, wild bulls, young men, or gipsies. Come the field path, Grace. I will go as far as the big oak with him, and then I shall turn back, and I shall come in by the stile opposite the church gate, and through the garden. So you can't miss me."

"I daresay he'll come back with you," said Grace.

"No, he won't. He will do nothing of the kind. He'll have to go on and open Lady Julia's bottle of port wine for his own drinking."

All this was very good on Lily's part, and very good also on the part of Mrs. Dale; and John was of course very much obliged to them. But there was a lack of romance in it all, which did not seem to him to argue well as to his success. He did not think much about it, but he felt that Lily would not have been so ready to arrange their walk had she intended to yield to his entreaty. No doubt in these latter days plain good sense had become the prevailing mark of her character,—perhaps, as Johnny thought, a little too strongly prevailing; but even with all her plain good sense and determination to dispense with the absurdities of romance in the affairs of her life, she would not have proposed herself as his companion for a walk across the fields merely that she might have an opportunity of accepting his hand. He did not say all this to himself, but he instinctively felt that it was so. And he felt also that it should have been his duty to arrange the walk, or the proper opportunity for the scene that was to come. She had done it instead,—she and her mother between them, thereby forcing upon him a painful conviction that he himself had not been equal to the occasion. "I always make a mull of it," he said to himself, when the girls went up to get their hats.

They went down together through the garden, and parted where the paths led away, one to the great house and the other towards the church. "I'll certainly come and call

upon the squire before I go back to London," said Johnny.

"We'll tell him so," said Mrs. Dale. "He would be sure to hear that you had been with us, even if we said nothing about it."

"Of course he would," said Lily; "Hopkins has seen him." Then they separated, and Lily and John Eames were together.

Hardly a word was said, perhaps not a word, till they had crossed the road and got into the field opposite to the church. And in this first field there was more than one path, and the children of the village were often there, and it had about it something of a public nature. John Eames felt that it was by no means a fitting field to say that which he had to say. In crossing it, therefore, he merely remarked that the day was very fine for walking. Then he added one special word, "And it is so good of you, Lily, to come with me."

"I am very glad to come with you. I would do more than that, John, to show how glad I am to see you." Then they had come to the second little gate, and beyond that the fields were really fields, and there were stiles instead of wicket-gates, and the business of the day must be begun.

"Lily, whenever I come here you say you are glad to see me?"

"And so I am,—very glad. Only you would take it as meaning what it does not mean, I would tell you, that of all my friends living away from the reach of my daily life, you are the one whose coming is ever the most pleasant to me."

"Oh, Lily!"

"It was, I think, only yesterday that I was telling Grace that you are more like a brother to me than any one else. I wish it might be so. I wish we might swear to be brother and sister. I'd do more for you then than walk across the fields with you to Guestwick Cottage. Your prosperity would then be the thing in the world for which I should be most anxious. And if you should marry——"

"It can never be like that between us," said Johnny.

"Can it not? I think it can. Perhaps not this year, or next year; perhaps not in the next five years. But I make myself happy with thinking that it may be so some day. I shall wait for it patiently, very patiently, even though you should rebuff me again and again,—as you have done now."

"I have not rebuffed you."

"Not maliciously, or injuriously, or offensively. I will be very patient, and take little rebuffs without complaining. This is the worst stile of all. When Grace and I are here together we can never manage it without tearing ourselves all to pieces. It is much nicer to have you to help me."

"Let me help you always," he said, keeping her hands in his after he had aided her to jump from the stile to the ground.

"Yes, as my brother."

"That is nonsense, Lily."

"Is it nonsense? Nonsense is a hard word."

"It is nonsense as coming from you to me. Lily, I sometimes think that I am persecuting you, writing to you, coming after you, as I am doing now,—telling the same whining story,—asking, asking, and asking for that which you say you will never give me. And then I feel ashamed of myself, and swear that I will do it no more."

"Do not be ashamed of yourself; but yet do it no more."

"And then," he continued, without minding her words, "at other times I feel that it must be my own fault; that if I only persevered with sufficient energy I must be successful. At such times I swear that I will never give it up."

"Oh, John, if you could only know how little worthy of such pursuit it is."

"Leave me to judge of that, dear. When a man has taken a month, or perhaps only a week, or perhaps not more than half an hour, to make up his mind, it may be very well to tell him that he doesn't know what he is about. I've been in the office now for over seven years, and the first day I went I put an oath into a book that I would come back and get you for my wife when I had got enough to live upon."

"Did you, John?"

"Yes. I can show it you. I used to come and hover about the place in the old days, before I went to London, when I was such a fool that I couldn't speak to you if I met you. I am speaking of a time long before,—before that man came down here."

"Do not speak of him, Johnny."

"I must speak of him. A man isn't to hold his tongue when everything he has in the world is at stake. I suppose he loved you after a fashion, once."

"Pray, pray do not speak ill of him."

"I am not going to abuse him. You can judge of him by his deeds. I cannot say anything worse of him than what they say. I suppose he loved you; but he certainly did not love you as I have done. I have at any rate been true to you. Yes, Lily, I have been true to you. I am true to you. He did not know what he was about. I do. I am justified in saying that I do. I want you to be my wife. It is no use your talking about it as though I only half wanted it."

"I did not say that."

"Is not a man to have any reward? Of course if you had married him there would have been an end of it. He had come in between me and my happiness, and I must have borne it, as other men bear such sorrows. But you have not married him; and, of course, I cannot but feel that I may yet have a chance. Lily, answer me this. Do you believe that I love you?" But she did not answer him. "You can at any rate tell me that. Do you think that I am in earnest?"

"Yes, I think you are in earnest."

"And do you believe that I love you with all my heart and all my strength and all my soul?"

"Oh, John!"

"But do you?"

"I think you love me."

"Think! what am I to say or to do to make you understand that my only idea of happiness is the idea that sooner or later I may get you to be my wife? Lily, will you say that it shall be so? Speak, Lily. There is no one that will not be

glad. Your uncle will consent,—has consented. Your mother wishes it. Bell wishes it. My mother wishes it. Lady Julia wishes it. You would be doing what everybody about you wants you to do. And why should you not do it? It isn't that you dislike me. You wouldn't talk about being my sister, if you had not some sort of regard for me."

"I have a regard for you."

"Then why will you not be my wife? Oh, Lily, say the word now, here, at once. Say the word, and you'll make me the happiest fellow in all England. "As he spoke he took her by both arms, and held her fast. She did not struggle to get away from him, but stood quite still, looking into his face, while the first sparkle of a salt tear formed itself in each eye. "Lily, one little word will do it,—half a word, a nod, a smile. Just touch my arm with your hand and I will take it for a yes." I think that she almost tried to touch him; that the word was in her throat, and that she almost strove to speak it. But there was no syllable spoken, and her fingers did not loose themselves to fall upon his sleeve. "Lily, Lily, what can I say to you?"

"I wish I could," she whispered;—but the whisper was so hoarse that he hardly recognized the voice.

"And why can you not? What is there to hinder you? There is nothing to hinder you, Lily."

"Yes, John; there is that which must hinder me."

"And what is it?"

"I will tell you. You are so good and so true, and so excellent,—such a dear, dear, dear friend, that I will tell you everything, so that you may read my heart. I will tell you as I tell mamma,—you and her and no one else;—for you are the choice friend of my heart. I cannot be your wife because of the love I bear for another man."

"And that man is he,—he who came here?"

"Of course it is he. I think, Johnny, you and I are alike in this, that when we have loved we cannot bring ourselves to change. You will not change, though it would be so much better you should do so."

"No; I will never change."

"Nor can I. When I sleep I dream of him. When I am alone I cannot banish him from my thoughts. I cannot define what it is to love him. I want nothing from him,—nothing, nothing. But I move about through my little world thinking of him, and I shall do so to the end. I used to feel proud of my love, though it made me so wretched that I thought it would kill me. I am not proud of it any longer. It is a foolish poor-spirited weakness,—as though my heart had been only half formed in the making. Do you be stronger, John. A man should be stronger than a woman."

"I have none of that sort of strength."

"Nor have I. What can we do but pity each other, and swear that we will be friends,—dear friends. There is the oak-tree and I have got to turn back. We have said everything that we can say,—unless you will tell me that you will be my brother."

"No; I will not tell you that."

"Good-by, then, Johnny."

He paused, holding her by the hand and thinking of another question which he longed to put to her,—considering whether he would ask her that question or not. He hardly knew whether he were entitled to ask it;—whether or no the asking of it would be ungenerous. She had said that she would tell him everything,—as she had told everything to her mother. "Of course," he said, "I have no right to expect to know anything of your future intentions?"

"You may know them all,—as far as I know them myself. I have said that you should read my heart."

"If this man, whose name I cannot bear to mention, should come again——"

"If he were to come again he would come in vain, John." She did not say that he had come again. She could tell her own secret, but not that of another person.

"You would not marry him, now that he is free?"

She stood and thought a while before she answered him. "No, I should not marry him now. I think not." Then she paused again. "Nay, I am sure I would not. After what has passed I could not trust myself to do it. There is my hand on it. I will not."

"No, Lily, I do not want that."

"But I insist. I will not marry Mr. Crosbie. But you must not misunderstand me, John. There;—all that is over for me now. All those dreams about love, and marriage, and of a house of my own, and children,—and a cross husband, and a wedding-ring growing always tighter as I grow fatter and older. I have dreamed of such things as other girls do,—more perhaps than other girls, more than I should have done. And now I accept the thing as finished. You wrote something in your book, you dear John,—something that could not be made to come true. Dear John, I wish for your sake it was otherwise. I will go home and I will write in my book, this very day, Lilian Dale, Old Maid. If ever I make that false, do you come and ask me for the page."

"Let it remain there till I am allowed to tear it out."

"I will write it, and it shall never be torn out. You I cannot marry. Him I will not marry. You may believe me, Johnny, when I say there can never be a third."

"And is that to be the end of it?"

"Yes;—that is to be the end of it. Not the end of our friendship. Old maids have friends."

"It shall not be the end of it. There shall be no end of it with me."

"But, John——"

"Do not suppose that I will trouble you again,—at any rate not for a while. In five years' time perhaps,——"

"Now, Johnny, you are laughing at me. And of course it is the best way. If there is not Grace, and she has caught me before I have turned back. Good-by, dear, dear John. God bless you. I think you the finest fellow there is in the world. I do, and so does mamma. Remember always that

there is a temple at Allington in which your worship is never forgotten." Then she pressed his hand and turned away from him to meet Grace Crawley. John did not stop to speak a word to his cousin, but pursued his way alone.

"That cousin of yours," said Lily, "is simply the dearest, warmest-hearted, finest creature that ever was seen in the shape of a man."

"Have you told him that you think him so?" said Grace.

"Indeed, I have," said Lily.

"But have you told this finest, warmest, dearest creature that he shall be rewarded with the prize he covets?"

"No, Grace. I have told him nothing of the kind. I think he understands it all now. If he does not, it is not for the want of my telling him. I don't suppose any lady was ever more open-spoken to a gentleman than I have been to him."

"And why have you sent him away disappointed? You know you love him."

"You see, my dear," said Lily, "you allow yourself, for the sake of your argument, to use a word in a double sense, and you attempt to confound me by doing so. But I am a great deal too clever for you, and have thought too much about it, to be taken in in that way. I certainly love your cousin John; and so I do love Mr. Boyce, the vicar."

"You love Johnny much better than you do Mr. Boyce."

"True; very much better; but it is the same sort of love. However, it is a great deal too deep for you to understand. You're too young, and I shan't try to explain it. But the long and the short of it is,—I am not going to marry your cousin."

"I wish you were," said Grace, "with all my heart."

John Eames as he returned to the cottage was by no means able to fall back upon those resolutions as to his future life, which he had formed for himself and communicated to his friend Dalrymple, and which he had intended to bring at once into force in the event of his being

again rejected by Lily Dale. "I will cleanse my mind of it altogether," he had said, "and though I may not forget her, I will live as though she were forgotten. If she declines my proposal again, I will accept her word as final. I will not go about the world any longer as a stricken deer,—to be pitied or else bullied by the rest of the herd." On his way down to Guestwick he had sworn twenty times that it should be so. He would make one more effort, and then he would give it up. But now, after his interview with Lily, he was as little disposed to give it up as ever.

He sat upon a gate in a paddock through which there was a back entrance into Lady Julia's garden, and there swore a thousand oaths that he would never give her up. He was, at any rate, sure that she would never become the wife of any one else. He was equally sure that he would never become the husband of any other wife. He could trust her. Yes; he was sure of that. But could he trust himself? Communing with himself, he told himself that after all he was but a poor creature. Circumstances had been very good to him, but he had done nothing for himself. He was vain, and foolish, and unsteady. So he told himself while sitting upon the gate. But he had, at any rate, been constant to Lily, and constant he would remain.

He would never more mention her name to any one,—unless it were to Lady Julia to-night. To Dalrymple he would not open his mouth about her, but would plainly ask his friend to be silent on that subject if her name should be mentioned by him. But morning and evening he would pray for her, and in his prayers he would always think of her as his wife. He would never speak to another girl without remembering that he was bound to Lily. He would go nowhere into society without recalling to mind the fact that he was bound by the chains of a solemn engagement. If he knew himself he would be constant to Lily.

And then he considered in what manner it would be best and most becoming that he should still prosecute his endeavour and repeat his offer. He thought that he would

write to her every year, on the same day of the year, year after year, it might be for the next twenty years. And his letters should be very simple. Sitting there on the gate he planned the wording of his letters;—of his first letter, and of his second, and of his third. They should be very like to each other,—should hardly be more than a repetition of the same words. "If now you are ready for me, then, Lily, am I, as ever, still ready for you." And then "if now" again,and again "if now;—and still if now." When his hair should be grey, and the wrinkles on his cheeks,—ay, though they should be on hers, he would still continue to tell her from year to year that he was ready to take her. Surely some day that "if now" would prevail. And should it never prevail, the merit of his constancy should be its own reward.

Such letters as those she would surely keep. Then he looked forward, down into the valley of coming years, and fancied her as she might sit reading them in the twilight of some long evening,—letters which had been written all in vain. He thought that he could look forward with some satisfaction towards the close of his own career, in having been the hero of such a love-story. At any rate, if such a story were to be his story, the melancholy attached to it should arise from no fault of his own. He would still press her to be his wife. And then as he remembered that he was only twenty-seven and that she was twenty-four, he began to marvel at the feeling of grey old age which had come upon him, and tried to make himself believe that he would have her yet before the bloom was off her cheek.

He went into the cottage and made his way at once into the room in which Lady Julia was sitting. She did not speak at first, but looked anxiously into his face. And he did not speak, but turned to a table near the window and took up a book,—though the room was too dark for him to see to read the words. "John," at last said Lady Julia.

"Well, my lady?"

"Have you nothing to tell me, John?"

"Nothing on earth,—except the same old story, which has now become a matter of course."

"But, John, will you not tell me what she has said?"

"Lady Julia, she has said no; simply no. It is a very easy word to say, and she has said it so often that it seems to come from her quite naturally." Then he got a candle and sat down over the fire with a volume of a novel. It was not yet past five, and Lady Julia did not go upstairs to dress till six, and therefore there was an hour during which they were together. John had at first been rather grand to his old friend, and very uncommunicative. But before the dressing bell had rung he had been coaxed into a confidential strain and had told everything. "I suppose it is wrong and selfish," he said. "I suppose I am a dog in a manger. But I do own that there is a consolation to me in the assurance that she will never be the wife of that scoundrel."

"I could never forgive her if she were to marry him now," said Lady Julia.

"I could never forgive him. But she has said that she will not, and I know that she will not forswear herself. I shall go on with it, Lady Julia. I have made up my mind to that. I suppose it will never come to anything, but I shall stick to it. I can live an old bachelor as well as another man. At any rate I shall stick to it." Then the good silly old woman comforted him and applauded him as though he were a hero among men, and did reward him, as Lily had predicted, by one of those now rare bottles of super-excellent port which had come to her from her brother's cellar.

John Eames stayed out his time at the cottage, and went over more than once again to Allington, and called on the squire, on one occasion dining with him and meeting the three ladies from the Small House; and he walked with the girls, comporting himself like any ordinary man. But he was not again alone with Lily Dale, nor did he learn whether she had in truth written those two words in her

book. But the reader may know that she did write them there on the evening of the day on which the promise was made. "Lilian Dale,—Old Maid."

And when John's holiday was over, he returned to his duties at the elbow of Sir Raffle Buffle.

CHAPTER XXXVI

Grace Crawley returns Home

ABOUT THIS TIME Grace Crawley received two letters, the first of them reaching her while John Eames was still at the cottage, and the other immediately after his return to London. They both help to tell our story, and our reader shall, therefore, read them if he so please,—or, rather, he shall read the first and as much of the second as is necessary for him. Grace's answer to the first letter he shall see also. Her answer to the second will be told in a very few words. The first was from Major Grantly, and the task of answering that was by no means easy to Grace.

"Cosby Lodge,—February, 186—.

"DEAREST GRACE,

"I told you when I parted from you, that I should write to you, and I think it best to do so at once, in order that you may fully understand me. Spoken words are soon forgotten,"—"I shall never forget his words," Grace said to herself as she read this;—"and are not always as plain as they might be. Dear Grace, I suppose I ought not to say so, but I fancied when I parted from you at Allington, that I had succeeded in making myself dear to you. I believe you to be so true in spirit, that you were unable to conceal from me the fact that you love me. I shall believe that this is so, till I am deliberately and solemnly assured by yourself that it is not so;—and I conjure you to think what is due

both to yourself and to myself, before you allow yourself to think of making such an assurance unless it be strictly true.

"I have already told my own friends that I have asked you to be my wife. I tell you this, in order that you may know how little effect your answer to me has had towards inducing me to give you up. What you said about your father and your family has no weight with me, and ought ultimately to have none with you. This business of your father's is a great misfortune,—so great that, probably, had we not known each other before it happened, it might have prevented our becoming intimate when we chanced to meet. But we had met before it happened, and before it happened I had determined to ask you to be my wife. What should I have to think of myself if I allowed my heart to be altered by such a cause as that?

"I have only further to say that I love you better than any one in the world, and that it is my best hope that you will be my wife. I will not press you till this affair of your father's has been settled; but when that is over I shall look for my reward without reference to its result. Not that I doubt the result if there be anything like justice in England; but that your debt to me, if you owe me any debt, will be altogether irrespective of that. If, as I suppose, you will remain at Allington for some time longer, I shall not see you till after the trial is over. As soon as that is done, I will come to you wherever you are. In the meantime I shall look for an answer to this; and if it be true that you love me, dear, dear Grace, pray have the courage to tell me so.

"Most affectionately your own,
"HENRY GRANTLY."

When the letter was given to Grace across the breakfast-table, both Mrs. Dale and Lily suspected that it came from Major Grantly, but not a word was spoken about it. When Grace with hesitating hand broke the envelope, neither of

her friends looked at her. Lily had a letter of her own, and Mrs. Dale opened the newspaper. But still it was impossible not to perceive that her face became red with blushes, and then they knew that the letter must be from Major Grantly. Grace herself could not read it, though her eye ran down over the two pages catching a word here and a word there. She had looked at the name at once, and had seen the manner of his signature. "Most affectionately your own!" What was she to say to him? Twice, thrice, as she sat at the breakfast-table she turned the page of the letter, and at each turning she read the signature. And she read the beginning, "Dearest Grace." More than that she did not really read till she had got the letter away with her into the seclusion of her own room.

Not a word was said about the letter at breakfast. Poor Grace went on eating or pretending to eat, but could not bring herself to utter a word. Mrs. Dale and Lily spoke of various matters, which were quite indifferent to them; but even with them the conversation was so difficult that Grace felt it to be forced, and was conscious that they were thinking about her and her lover. As soon as she could make an excuse she left the room, and hurrying upstairs took the letter from her pocket and read it in earnest.

"That was from Major Grantly, mamma," said Lily.

"I daresay it was, my dear."

"And what had we better do; or what had we better say?"

"Nothing,—I should say. Let him fight his own battle. If we interfere, we may probably only make her more stubborn in clinging to her old idea."

"I think she will cling to it."

"For a time she will, I daresay. And it will be best that she should. He himself will respect her for it afterwards." Thus it was agreed between them that they should say nothing to Grace about the letter unless Grace should first speak to them.

Grace read her letter over and over again. It was the first love-letter she had ever had;—the first letter she had ever received from any man except her father and brother,—the first, almost, that had ever been written to her by any other than her own old special friends. The words of it were very strange to her ear. He had told her when he left her that he would write to her, and therefore she had looked forward to the event which had now come; but she had thought that it would be much more distant,—and she had tried to make herself believe that when it did come it would be very different from this letter which she now possessed. "He will tell me that he has altered his mind. He ought to do so. It is not proper that he should still think of me when we are in such disgrace." But now the letter had come, and she acknowledged the truth of his saying that written words were clearer in their expression than those simply spoken. "Not that I could ever forget a syllable that he said." Yet, as she held the letter in her hand she felt that it was a possession. It was a thing at which she could look in coming years, when he and she might be far apart,—a thing at which she could look with pride in remembering that he had thought her worthy of it.

Neither on that day nor on the next did she think of her answer, nor on the third or the fourth with any steady thinking. She knew that an answer would have to be written, and she felt that the sooner it was written the easier might be the writing; but she felt also that it should not be written too quickly. A week should first elapse, she thought, and therefore a week was allowed to elapse, and then the day for writing her answer came. She had spoken no word about it either to Mrs. Dale or to Lily. She had longed to do so, but had feared. Even though she should speak to Lily she could not be led by Lily's advice. Her letter, whatever it might be, must be her own letter. She would admit of no dictation. She must say her own say, let her say it ever so badly. As to the manner of saying it, Lily's aid would have been invaluable; but she feared that

she could not secure that aid without compromising her own power of action,—her own individuality; and therefore she said no word about the letter either to Lily or to Lily's mother.

On a certain morning she fixed herself at her desk to write her letter. She had known that the task would be difficult, but she had little known how difficult it would be. On that day of her first attempt she did not get it written at all. How was she to begin? He had called her "Dearest Grace;" and this mode of beginning seemed as easy as it was sweet. "It is very easy for a gentleman," she said to herself, "because he may say just what he pleases." She wrote the words, "Dearest Henry," on a scrap of paper, and immediately tore it into fragments as though she were ashamed of having written them. She knew that she would not dare to send away a letter beginning with such words. She would not even have dared to let such words in her own handwriting remain within the recesses of her own little desk. "Dear Major Grantly," she began at length. It seemed to her to be very ugly, but after much consideration she believed it to be correct. On the second day the letter was written as follows:—

"Allington, Thursday.

"MY DEAR MAJOR GRANTLY,—

"I do not know how I ought to answer your kind letter, but I must tell you that I am very much flattered by your great goodness to me. I cannot understand why you should think so much of me, but I suppose it is because you have felt for all our misfortunes. I will not say anything about what might have happened, if it had not been for papa's sorrow and disgrace; and as far as I can help it, I will not think of it; but I am sure that I ought not to think about loving any one, that is, in the way you mean, while we are in such trouble at home. I should not dare to meet any of your great friends, knowing that I had brought nothing with me but disgrace. And I should feel that I was

doing an injury to *dear* Edith, which would be worse to me than anything.

"Pray believe that I am quite in earnest about this. I know that a gentleman ought not to marry any girl to do himself and his family an injury by it; and I know that if I were to make such a marriage I should be unhappy ever afterwards, even though I loved the man ever so dearly, with all my heart." These last words she had underscored at first, but the doing so had been the unconscious expression of her own affection, and had been done with no desire on her part to convey that expression to him. But on reading the words she discovered their latent meaning, and wrote it all again.

"Therefore I know that it will be best that I should wish you good-by, and I do so, thanking you again and again for your goodness to me.

"Believe me to be,

"Yours very sincerely,

"GRACE CRAWLEY."

The letter when it was written was hateful to her; but she had tried her hand at it again and again, and had found that she could do nothing better. There was much in his letter that she had not attempted to answer. He had implored her to tell him whether or no she did in truth love him. Of course she loved him. He knew that well enough. Why should she answer any such question? There was a way of answering it indeed which might serve her turn,—or rather serve his, of which she was thinking more than of her own. She might say that she did not love him. It would be a lie, and he would know that it would be a lie. But still it might serve the turn. She did not like the idea of writing such a lie as that, but nevertheless she considered the matter. It would be very wicked; but still, if it would serve the turn, might it not be well to write it. But at last she reflected that, after all, the doing of the thing was in her own hands. She could refuse to marry this man without

burdening her conscience with any lie about it. It only required that she should be firm. She abstained, therefore, from the falsehood, and left her lover's question unanswered. So she put up her letter and directed it, and carried it herself to the village post-office.

On the day after this she got the second letter, and that she showed immediately to Mrs. Dale. It was from her mother, and was written to tell her that her father was seriously ill. "He went up to London to see a lawyer about this weary work of the trial," said Mrs. Crawley. "The fatigue was very great, and on the next day he was so weak that he could not leave his bed. Dr. Turner, who has been very kind, says that we need not frighten ourselves, but he thinks it must be some time before he can leave the house. He has a low fever on him, and wants nourishment. His mind has wandered once or twice, and he has asked for you, and I think it will be best, love, that you should come home. I know you will not mind it when I say that I think he would like to have you here. Dr. Turner says that the illness is chiefly owing to his not having proper food."

Of course she would go at once. "Dear Mrs. Dale," she said, "I must go home. Can you send me to the station?" Then Mrs. Dale read the letter. Of course they would send her. Would she go on that day, or on the next? Might it not be better to write first, and say that she was going? But Grace would go at once. "I know it will be a comfort to mamma; and I know that he is worse than mamma says." Of course there was no more to be said, and she was despatched to the station. Before she went Mrs. Dale asked after her purse. "If there is any trouble about money,—for your journey, or anything, you will not scruple to come to me as to an old friend." But Grace assured her that there was no trouble about money—for her journey. Then Lily took her aside and produced two clean new five-pound notes. "Grace, dear, you won't be ill-natured. You know I have a little fortune of my own. You know I can give them with-

out missing them." Grace threw herself into her friend's arms and wept, but would have none of her money. "Buy a present from me for your mother,—whom I love though I do not know her." "I will give her your love," Grace said, "but nothing else." And then she went.

CHAPTER XXXVII

Hook Court

MR. DOBBS BROUGHTON and Mr. Musselboro were sitting together on a certain morning at their office in the City, discussing the affairs of their joint business. The City office was a very poor place indeed, in comparison with the fine house which Mr. Dobbs occupied at the West End; but then City offices are poor places, and there are certain City occupations which seem to enjoy the greater credit the poorer are the material circumstances by which they are surrounded. Turning out of a lane which turns out of Lombard Street, there is a desolate, forlorn-looking, dark alley, which is called Hook Court. The entrance to this alley is beneath the first-floor of one of the houses in the lane, and in passing under this covered way the visitor to the place finds himself in a small paved square court, at the two further corners of which there are two open doors; for in Hook Court there are only two houses. There is No. 1, Hook Court, and No. 2, Hook Court. The entire premises indicated by No. 1, are occupied by a firm of wine and spirit merchants, in connexion with whose trade one side and two angles of the court are always lumbered with crates, hampers, and wooden cases. And nearly in the middle of the court, though somewhat more to the wine-merchants' side than to the other, there is always gaping open a trap-door, leading down to vaults below; and over the trap there is a

great board with a bright advertisement in very large letters:—

BURTON AND BANGLES.
HIMALAYA WINES,
22s. 6d. per dozen.

And this notice is so bright and so large, and the trap-door is so conspicuous in the court, that no visitor, even to No. 2, ever afterwards can quite divest his memory of those names, Burton and Bangles, Himalaya wines. It may therefore be acknowledged that Burton and Bangles have achieved their object in putting up the notice. The house No. 2, small as it seems to be, standing in the jamb of a corner, is divided among different occupiers, whose names are painted in small letters upon the very dirty posts of the doorway. Nothing can be more remarkable than the contrast between Burton and Bangles and these other City gentlemen in the method taken by them in declaring their presence to visitors in the court. The names of Dobbs Broughton and of A. Musselboro,—the Christian name of Mr. Musselboro was Augustus,—were on one of those dirty posts, not joined together by any visible "and," so as to declare boldly that they were partners; but in close vicinity,—showing at least that the two gentlemen would be found in apartments very near to each other. And on the first-floor of this house Dobbs Broughton and his friend did occupy three rooms,—or rather two rooms and a closet—between them. The larger and front room was tenanted by an old clerk, who sat within a rail in one corner of it. And there was a broad, short counter which jutted out from the wall into the middle of the room, intended for the use of such of the public as might come to transact miscellaneous business with Dobbs Broughton or Augustus Musselboro. But any one accustomed to the look of offices might have seen with half an eye that very little business was ever done on that counter. Behind this large room was a smaller one, belonging to Dobbs Broughton,

in the furnishing and arrangement of which some regard had been paid to comfort. The room was carpeted, and there was a sofa in it, though a very old one, and two arm-chairs and a mahogany office-table, and a cellaret, which was generally well supplied with wine which Dobbs Broughton did not get out of the vaults of his neighbours, Burton and Bangles. Behind this again, but with a separate entrance from the passage, was the closet; and this closet was specially devoted to the use of Mr. Musselboro. Closet as it was,—or cupboard as it might almost have been called,—it contained a table and two chairs; and it had a window of its own, which opened out upon a blank wall which was distant from it not above four feet. As the house to which this wall belonged was four stories high, it would sometimes happen that Mr. Musselboro's cupboard was rather dark. But this mattered the less as in these days Mr. Musselboro seldom used it. Mr. Musselboro, who was very constant at his place of business,—much more constant than his friend, Dobbs Broughton,—was generally to be found in his friend's room. Only on some special occasions, on which it was thought expedient that the commercial world should be made to understand that Mr. Augustus Musselboro had an individual existence of his own, did that gentleman really seat himself in the dark closet. Mr. Dobbs Broughton, had he been asked what was his trade, would have said that he was a stock-broker; and he would have answered truly, for he was a stockbroker. A man may be a stockbroker though he never sells any stock; as he may be a barrister though he has no practice at the bar. I do not say that Mr. Broughton never sold any stock; but the buying and selling of stock for other people was certainly not his chief business. And had Mr. Musselboro been asked what was his trade, he would have probably given an evasive answer. At any rate in the City, and among people who understood City matters, he would not have said that he was a stockbroker. Both Mr. Broughton and Mr. Musselboro bought and sold

a good deal, but it was chiefly on account. The shares which were bought and sold very generally did not pass from hand to hand; but the difference in the price of the shares did do so. And then they had another little business between them. They lent money on interest. And in this business there was a third partner, whose name did not appear on the dirty door-post. That third partner was Mrs. Van Siever, the mother of Clara Van Siever whom Mr. Conway Dalrymple intended to portray as Jael driving a nail into Sisera's head.

On a certain morning Mr. Broughton and Mr. Musselboro were sitting together in the office which has been described. They were in Mr. Broughton's room, and occupied each an arm-chair on the different sides of the fire. Mr. Musselboro was sitting close to the table, on which a ledger was open before him, and he had a pen and ink before him, as though he had been at work. Dobbs Broughton had a small betting-book in his hand, and was seated with his feet up against the side of the fireplace. Both men wore their hats, and the aspect of the room was not the aspect of a place of business. They had been silent for some minutes when Broughton took his cigar-case out of his pocket, and nibbled off the end of a cigar, preparatory to lighting it.

"You had better not smoke here this morning, Dobbs," said Musselboro.

"Why shouldn't I smoke in my own room?"

"Because she'll be here just now."

"What do I care? If you think I'm going to be afraid of Mother Van, you're mistaken. Let come what may, I'm not going to live under her thumb." So he lighted his cigar.

"All right," said Musselboro, and he took up his pen and went to work at his book.

"What is she coming here for this morning?" asked Broughton.

"To look after her money. What should she come for?"

"She gets her interest. I don't suppose there's better paid money in the City."

"She hasn't got what was coming to her at Christmas yet."

"And this is February. What would she have? She had better put her dirty money into the three per cents., if she is frightened at having to wait a week or two."

"Can she have it to-day?"

"What, the whole of it? Of course she can't. You know that as well as I do. She can have four hundred pounds, if she wants it. But seeing all she gets out of the concern, she has no right to press for it in that way. She is the —— old usurer I ever came across in my life."

"Of course she likes her money."

"Likes her money! By George she does; her own and anybody else's that she can get hold of. For a downright leech, recommend me always to a woman. When a woman does go in for it, she is much more thorough than any man." Then Broughton turned over the little pages of his book, and Musselboro pondered over the big pages of his book, and there was silence for a quarter of an hour.

"There's something about nine hundred and fifteen pounds due to her," said Musselboro.

"I daresay there is."

"It would be a very good thing to let her have it if you've got it. The whole of it this morning, I mean."

"If! yes, if!" said Broughton.

"I know there's more than that at the bank."

"And I'm to draw out every shilling that there is! I'll see Mother Van—further first. She can have 500*l.* if she likes it,—and the rest in a fortnight. Or she can have my note-of-hand for it all at fourteen days."

"She won't like that at all," said Musselboro.

"Then she must lump it. I'm not going to bother myself about her. I've pretty nearly as much money in it as she has, and we're in a boat together. If she comes here bothering, you'd better tell her so."

"You'll see her yourself?"

"Not unless she comes within the next ten minutes. I must go down to the court. I said I'd be there by twelve. I've got somebody I want to see."

"I'd stay if I were you."

"Why should I stay for her? If she thinks that I'm going to make myself her clerk, she's mistaken. It may be all very well for you, Mussy, but it won't do for me. I'm not dependent on her, and I don't want to marry her daughter."

"It will simply end in her demanding to have her money back again."

"And how will she get it?" said Dobbs Broughton. "I haven't a doubt in life but she'd take it to-morrow if she could put her hands upon it. And then, after a bit, when she began to find that she didn't like four per cent., she'd bring it back again. But nobody can do business after such a fashion as that. For the last three years she's drawn close upon two thousand a year for less than eighteen thousand pounds. When a woman wants to do that, she can't have her money in her pocket every Monday morning."

"But you've done better than that yourself, Dobbs."

"Of course I have. And who has made the connexion: and who has done the work? I suppose she doesn't think that I'm to have all the sweat and that she is to have all the profit."

"If you talk of work, Dobbs, it is I that have done the most of it." This Mr. Musselboro said a in a very serious voice, and with a look of much reproach.

"And you've been paid for what you've done. Come, Mussy, you'd better not turn against me. You'll never get your change out of that. Even if you marry the daughter, that won't give you the mother's money. She'll stick to every shilling of it till she dies; and she'd take it with her then, if she knew how." Having said this, he got up from his chair, put his little book into his pocket, and walked out of the office. He pushed his way across the court, which was more than ordinarily crowded with the imple-

ments of Burton and Bangles' trade, and as he passed under the covered way he encountered at the entrance an old woman getting out of a cab. The old woman was, of course, Mother Van, as her partner, Mr. Dobbs Broughton, irreverently called her. "Mrs. Van Siever, how d'ye do? Let me give you a hand. Fare from South Kensington? I always give the fellows three shillings."

"You don't mean to tell me it's six miles!" And she tendered a florin to the man.

"Can't take that, ma'am," said the cabman.

"Can't take it! But you must take it. Broughton, just get a policeman, will you?" Dobbs Broughton satisfied the driver out of his own pocket, and the cab was driven away. "What did you give him?" said Mrs. Van Siever.

"Just another sixpence. There never is a policeman anywhere about here."

"It'll be out of your own pocket, then," said Mrs. Van. "But you're not going away?"

"I must be at Capel Court by half-past twelve;—I must, indeed. If it wasn't real business, I'd stay."

"I told Musselboro I should be here."

"He's up there, and he knows all about the business just as well as I do. When I found that I couldn't stay for you, I went through the account with him, and it's all settled. Good morning. I'll see you at the West End in a day or two." Then he made his way out into Lombard Street, and Mrs. Van Siever picked her steps across the yard, and mounted the stairs, and made her way into the room in which Mr. Musselboro was sitting.

"Somebody's been smoking, Gus," she said, almost as soon as she had entered the room.

"That's nothing new here," he replied, as he got up from his chair.

"There's no good being done when men sit and smoke over their work. Is it you, or he, or both of you?"

"Well;—it was Broughton was smoking just now. I don't smoke of a morning myself."

"What made him get up and run away when I came?"

"How can I tell, Mrs. Van Siever?" said Musselboro, laughing. "If he did run away when you came, I suppose it was because he didn't want to see you."

"And why shouldn't he want to see me? Gus, I expect the truth from you. How are things going on here?" To this question Mr. Musselboro made no immediate answer; but tilted himself back in his chair and took his hat off, and put his thumbs into the arm-holes of his waistcoat, and looked his patroness full in the face. "Gus," she said again, "I do expect the truth from you. How are things going on here?"

"There'd be a good business,—if he'd only keep things together."

"But he's idle. Isn't he idle?"

"Confoundedly idle," said Musselboro.

"And he drinks;—don't he drink in the day?"

"Like the mischief,—some days. But that isn't the worst of it."

"And what is the worst of it?"

"Newmarket;—that's the rock he's going to pieces on."

"You don't mean to say he takes the money out of the business for that?" And Mrs. Van Siever's face, as she asked the question, expressed almost a tragic horror. "If I thought that I wouldn't give him an hour's mercy."

"When a man bets he doesn't well know what money he uses. I can't say that he takes money that is not his own. Situated as I am, I don't know what is his own and what isn't. If your money was in my name I could keep a hand on it;—but as it is not I can do nothing. I can see that what is put out is put out fairly well; and when I think of it, Mrs. Van Siever, it is quite wonderful that we've lost so little. It has been next to nothing. That has been my doing;—and that's about all that I can do."

"You must know whether he has used my money for his own purposes or not."

"If you ask me, I think he has," said Mr. Musselboro.

"Then I'll go into it, and I'll find it out, and if it is so, as sure as my name's Van Siever, I'll sew him up." Having uttered which terrible threat, the old woman drew a chair to the table and seated herself fairly down, as though she were determined to go through all the books of the office before she quitted that room. Mrs. Van Siever in her present habiliments was not a thing so terrible to look at as she had been in her wiggeries at Mrs. Dobbs Broughton's dinner-table. Her curls were laid aside altogether, and she wore simply a front beneath her close bonnet,—and a very old front, too, which was not loudly offensive because it told no lies. Her eyes were as bright, and her little wizen face was as sharp, as ever; but the wizen face and the bright eyes were not so much amiss as seen together with the old dark brown silk dress which she now wore, as they had been with the wiggeries and the evening finery. Even now, in her morning costume, in her work-a-day business dress, as we may call it, she looked to be very old,—so old that nobody could guess her age. People attempting to guess would say that she must be at least over eighty. And yet she was wiry, and strong, and nimble. It was not because she was feeble that she was thought to be so old. They who so judged of her were led to their opinion by the extreme thinness of her face, and by the brightness of her eyes, joined to the depth of the hollows in which they lay, and the red margin by which they were surrounded. It was not really the fact that Mrs. Van Siever was so very aged, for she had still some years to live before she would reach eighty, but that she was such a weird old woman, so small, so ghastly, and so ugly! "I'll sew him up, if he's been robbing me," she said. "I will, indeed." And she stretched out her hand to grab at the ledger which Musselboro had been using.

"You won't understand anything from that," said he, pushing the book over to her.

"You can explain it to me."

"That's all straight sailing, that is."

"And where does he keep the figures that ain't straight sailing? That's the book I want to see."

"There is no such book."

"Look here, Gus,—if I find you deceiving me I'll throw you overboard as sure as I'm a living woman. I will indeed. I'll have no mercy. I've stuck to you, and made a man of you, and I expect you to stick to me."

"Not much of a man," said Musselboro, with a touch of scorn in his voice.

"You've never had a shilling yet but what I gave you."

"Yes; I have. I've had what I've worked for,—and worked confounded hard too."

"Look here, Musselboro; if you're going to throw me over, just tell me so, and let us begin fair."

"I'm not going to throw you over. I've always been on the square with you. Why don't you trust me out and out, and then I could do a deal better for you. You ask me now about your money. I don't know about your money, Mrs. Van Siever. How am I to know anything about your money, Mrs. Van Siever? You don't give me any power of keeping a hand upon Dobbs Broughton. I suppose you have security from Dobbs Broughton, but I don't know what security you have, Mrs. Van Siever. He owes you now 915*l.* 16*s.* 2*d.* on last year's account!"

"Why doesn't he give me a cheque for the money?"

"He says he can't spare it. You may have 500*l.*, and the rest when he can give it you. Or he'll give you his note-of-hand at fourteen days for the whole."

"Bother his note-of-hand. Why should I take his note-of-hand?"

"Do as you like, Mrs. Van Siever."

"It's the interest on my own money. Why don't he give it to me? I suppose he has had it."

"You must ask him that, Mrs. Van Siever. You're in partnership with him, and he can tell you. Nobody else knows anything about it. If you were in partnership with

me, then of course I could tell you. But you're not. You've never trusted me, Mrs. Van Siever."

The lady remained there closeted with Mr. Musselboro for an hour after that, and did, I think, at length learn something more as to the details of her partner's business, than her faithful servant Mr. Musselboro had at first found himself able to give to her. And at last they came to friendly and confidential terms, in the midst of which the personal welfare of Mr. Dobbs Broughton was, I fear, somewhat forgotten. Not that Mr. Musselboro palpably and plainly threw his friend overboard. He took his friend's part,—alleging excuses for him, and pleading some facts. "Of course, you know, a man like that is fond of pleasure, Mrs. Van Siever. He's been at it more or less all his life. I don't suppose he ever missed a Derby or an Oaks, or the cup at Ascot, or the Goodwood in his life." "He'll have to miss them before long, I'm thinking," said Mrs. Van Siever. "And as to not cashing up, you must remember, Mrs. Van Siever, that ten per cent. won't come in quite as regularly as four or five. When you go for high interest, there must be hitches here and there. There must, indeed, Mrs. Van Siever." "I know all about it," said Mrs. Van Siever. "If he gave it me as soon as he got it himself, I shouldn't complain. Never mind. He's only got to give me my little bit of money out of the business, and then he and I will be all square. You come and see Clara this evening, Gus."

Then Mr. Musselboro put Mrs. Van Siever into another cab, and went out upon 'Change,—hanging about the Bank, and standing in Threadneedle Street, talking to other men just like himself. When he saw Dobbs Broughton he told that gentleman that Mrs. Van Siever had been in her tantrums, but that he had managed to pacify her before she left Hook Court. "I'm to take her the cheque for the five hundred to-night," he said.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Jael

ON the first of March, Conway Dalrymple's easel was put up in Mrs. Dobbs Broughton's boudoir upstairs, the canvas was placed upon it on which the outlines of Jael and Sisera had been already drawn, and Mrs. Broughton and Clara Van Siever and Conway Dalrymple were assembled with the view of steady art-work. But before we see how they began their work together, we will go back for a moment to John Eames on his return to his London lodgings. The first thing every man does when he returns home after an absence, is to look at his letters, and John Eames looked at his. There were not very many. There was a note marked immediate, from Sir Raffle Buffle, in which Sir R. had scrawled in four lines a notification that he should be driven to an extremity of inconvenience if Eames were not at his post at half-past nine on the following morning. "I think I see myself there at that hour," said John. There was a notification of a house dinner, which he was asked to join, at his club, and a card for an evening gathering at Lady Glencora Palliser's,—procured for him by his friend Conway,—and an invitation to dinner at the house of his uncle, Mr. Toogood; and there was a scented note in the handwriting of a lady, which he did not recognize. "My nearest and dearest friend, M. D. M.," he said, as he opened the note and looked at the signature. Then he read the letter from Miss Demolines.

"My dear Mr. Eames,

"Pray come to me at once. I know that you are to be back to-morrow. Do not lose an hour if you can help it. I shall be at home at half-past five. I fear what you know of has been begun. But it certainly shall not go on. In one way or

another it must be prevented. I won't say another word till I see you, but pray come at once.

"Yours always,

"*Thursday.*" "M. D. M."

"Poor mamma isn't very well, so you had better ask for me."

"Beautiful!" said Johnny, as he read the note. "There's nothing I like so much as a mystery,—especially if it's about nothing. I wonder why she is so desperately anxious that the picture should not be painted. I'd ask Dalrymple, only I should spoil the mystery." Then he sat himself down, and began to think of Lily. There could be no treason to Lily in his amusing himself with the freaks of such a woman as Miss Demolines.

At eleven o'clock on the morning of the 1st of March,—the day following that on which Miss Demolines had written her note,—the easel was put up and the canvas was placed on it in Mrs. Broughton's room. Mrs. Broughton and Clara were both there, and when they had seen the outlines as far as it had been drawn, they proceeded to make arrangements for their future operations. The period of work was to begin always at eleven, and was to be continued for an hour and a half or for two hours on the days on which they met. I fear that there was a little improper scheming in this against the two persons whom the ladies were bound to obey. Mr. Dobbs Broughton invariably left his house soon after ten in the morning. It would sometimes happen, though not frequently, that he returned home early in the day,—at four perhaps, or even before that; and should he chance to do so while the picture was going on, he would catch them at their work if the work were postponed till after luncheon. And then again, Mrs. Van Siever would often go out in the morning, and when she did so, would always go without her daughter. On such occasions she went into the city, or to other resorts of business, at which, in some manner quite unintelligible to

her daughter, she looked after her money. But when she did not go out in the morning, she did go out in the afternoon, and she would then require her daughter's company. There was some place to which she always went of a Friday morning, and at which she stayed for two or three hours. Friday therefore was a fitting day on which to begin the work at Mrs. Broughton's house. All this was explained between the three conspirators. Mrs. Dobbs Broughton declared that if she entertained the slightest idea that her husband would object to the painting of the picture in her room, nothing on earth would induce her to lend her countenance to it; but yet it might be well not to tell him just at first, perhaps not till the sittings were over, —perhaps not till the picture was finished; as, otherwise, tidings of the picture might get round to ears which were not intended to hear it. "Poor dear Dobbs is so careless with a secret." Miss Van Siever explained her motives in a very different way. "I know mamma would not let me do it if she knew it; and therefore I shall not tell her." "My dear Clara," said Mrs. Broughton with a smile, "you are so outspoken!" "And why not?" said Miss Van Siever. "I am old enough to judge for myself. If mamma does not want to be deceived, she ought not to treat me like a child. Of course she'll find it out sooner or later; but I don't care about that." Conway Dalrymple said nothing as the two ladies were thus excusing themselves. "How delightful it must be not to have a master," said Mrs. Broughton, addressing him. "But then a man has to work for his own bread," said he. "I suppose it comes about equal in the long run."

Very little drawing or painting was done on that day. In the first place it was necessary that the question of costume should be settled, and both Mrs. Broughton and the artist had much to say on the subject. It was considered proper that Jael should be dressed as a Jewess, and there came to be much question how Jewesses dressed themselves in those very early days. Mrs. Broughton had pre-

pared her jewels and raiment of many colours, but the painter declared that the wife of Heber the Kenite would have no jewels. But when Mrs. Broughton discovered from her Bible that Heber had been connected by family ties with Moses, she was more than ever sure that Heber's wife would have in her tent much of the spoilings of the Egyptians. And when Clara Van Siever suggested that at any rate she would not have worn them in a time of confusion when soldiers were loose, flying about the country, Mrs. Broughton was quite confident that she would have put them on before she invited the captain of the enemy's host into her tent. The artist at last took the matter into his own hand by declaring that Miss Van Siever would sit the subject much better without jewels, and therefore all Mrs. Broughton's gewgaws were put back into their boxes. And then on four different times the two ladies had to retire into Mrs. Broughton's room in order that Jael might be arrayed in various costumes,—and in each costume she had to kneel down, taking the hammer in he hand, and holding the pointed stick which had been prepared to do duty as the nail, upon the forehead of a dummy Sisera. At last it was decided that her raiment should be altogether white, and that she should wear, twisted round her head and falling over her shoulder, a Roman silk scarf of various colours. "Where Jael could have gotten it I don't know," said Clara. "You may be sure that there were lots of such things among the Egyptians," said Mrs. Broughton, "and that Moses brought away all the best for his own family."

"And who is to be Sisera?" asked Mrs. Broughton in one of the pauses in their work.

"I'm thinking of asking my friend John Eames to sit."

"Of course we cannot sit together," said Miss Van Siever.

"There's no reason why you should," said Dalrymple. "I can do the second figure in my own room." Then there was a bargain made that Sisera should not be a portrait.

"It would never do," said Mrs. Broughton, shaking her head very gravely.

Though there was really very little done to the picture on that day, the work was commenced; and Mrs. Broughton, who had at first objected strongly to the idea, and who had said twenty times that it was quite out of the question that it should be done in her house, became very eager in her delight about it. Nobody should know anything of the picture till it should be exhibited. That would be best. And it should be the picture of the year! She was a little heart-broken when Dalrymple assured her that it could not possibly be finished for exhibition in that May; but she came to again when he declared that he meant to put out all his strength upon it. "There will be five or six months' work in it," he said. "Will there, indeed? And how much work was there in 'The Graces?' " "The Graces," as will perhaps be remembered, was the triple portrait of Mrs. Dobbs Broughton herself. This question the artist did not answer with absolute accuracy, but contented himself with declaring that with such a model as Mrs. Broughton the picture had been comparatively easy.

Mrs. Broughton, having no doubt that ultimate object of which she had spoken to her friend Conway steadily in view, took occasion before the sitting was over to leave the room, so that the artist might have an opportunity of speaking a word in private to his model,—if he had any such word to speak. And Mrs. Broughton, as she did this, felt that she was doing her duty as a wife, a friend, and a Christian. She was doing her duty as a wife, because she was giving the clearest proof in the world,—the clearest at any rate to herself,—that the intimacy between herself and her friend Conway had in it nothing that was improper. And she was doing her duty as a friend, because Clara Van Siever, with her large expectations, would be an eligible wife. And she was doing her duty as a Christian, because the whole thing was intended to be moral. Miss Demolines had declared that her friend Maria Clutterbuck,—as

Miss Demolines delighted to call Mrs. Broughton, in memory of dear old innocent days,—had high principles; and the reader will see that she was justified in her declaration. "It will be better so," said Mrs. Broughton, as she sat upon her bed and wiped a tear from the corner of her eye. "Yes; it will be better so. There is a pang. Of course there's a pang. But it will be better so." Acting upon this high principle, she allowed Conway Dalrymple five minutes to say what he had to say to Clara Van Siever. Then she allowed herself to indulge in some very savage feelings in reference to her husband,—accusing her husband in her thoughts of great cruelty,—nay, of brutality, because of certain sharp words that he had said as to Conway Dalrymple. "But of course he can't understand," said Mrs. Broughton to herself. "How is it to be expected that he should understand?"

But she allowed her friend on this occasion only five minutes, thinking probably that so much time might suffice. A woman, when she is jealous, is apt to attribute to the other woman with whom her jealousy is concerned, both weakness and timidity, and to the man both audacity and strength. A woman who has herself taken perhaps twelve months in the winning, will think that another woman is to be won in five minutes. It is not to be supposed that Mrs. Dobbs Broughton had ever been won by any one except by Mr. Dobbs Broughton. At least, let it not be supposed that she had ever acknowledged a spark of love for Conway Dalrymple. But nevertheless there was enough of jealousy in her present mood to make her think poorly of Miss Van Siever's capacity for standing a siege against the artist's eloquence. Otherwise, having left the two together with the object which she had acknowledged to herself, she would hardly have returned to them after so very short an interval.

"I hope you won't dislike the trouble of all this?" said Dalrymple to his model, as soon as Mrs. Broughton was gone.

"I cannot say that I like it very much," said Miss Van Siever.

"I'm afraid it will be a bore;—but I hope you'll go through with it."

"I shall if I am not prevented," said Miss Van Siever. "When I've said that I'll do a thing, I like to do it."

There was a pause in the conversation which took up a considerable portion of the five minutes. Miss Van Siever was not holding her nail during these moments, but was sitting in a commonplace way on her chair, while Dalrymple was scraping his palette. "I wonder what it was that first induced you to sit?" said he.

"Oh, I don't know. I took a fancy for it."

"I'm very glad you did take the fancy. You'll make an excellent model. If you won't mind posing again for a few minutes—I will not weary you to-day. Your right arm a little more forward."

"But I should tumble down."

"Not if you lean well on to the nail."

"But that would have woken Sisera before she had struck a blow."

"Never mind that. Let us try it." Then Mrs. Broughton returned, with that pleasant feeling in her bosom of having done her duty as a wife, a friend, and a Christian. "Mrs. Broughton," continued the painter, "just steady Miss Van Siever's shoulder with your hand; and now bring the arm and the elbow a little more forward."

"But Jael did not have a friend to help her in that way," said Miss Van Siever.

At the end of an hour and a half the two ladies retired, and Jael disrobed herself, and Miss Van Siever put on her customary raiment. It was agreed among them that they had commenced their work auspiciously, and that they would meet again on the following Monday. The artist begged to be allowed an hour to go on with his work in Mrs. Broughton's room, and the hour was conceded to him. It was understood that he could not take the canvas

backwards and forwards with him to his own house, and he pointed out that no progress whatever could be made, unless he were occasionally allowed some such grace as this. Mrs. Broughton doubted and hesitated, made difficulties, and lifted up her hands in despair. "It is easy for you to say, Why not? but I know very well why not." But at last she gave way. "Honi soit qui mal y pense," she said; "that must be my protection." So she followed Miss Van Siever downstairs, leaving Mr. Dalrymple in possession of her boudoir. "I shall give you just one hour," she said, "and then I shall come and turn you out." So she went down, and, as Miss Van Siever would not stay to lunch with her, she ate her lunch by herself, sending a glass of sherry and a biscuit up to the poor painter at his work.

Exactly at the end of the hour she returned to him. "Now, Conway, you must go," she said.

"But why in such a hurry?"

"Because I say that it must be so. When I say so, pray let that be sufficient." But still Dalrymple went on working. "Conway," she said, "how can you treat me with so much disdain?"

"Disdain, Mrs. Broughton!"

"Yes, disdain. Have I not begged you to understand that I cannot allow you to remain here, and yet you pay no attention to my wishes?"

"I have done now;" and he began to put his brushes and paints together. "I suppose all these things may remain here?"

"Yes; they may remain. They must do so, of course. There; if you will put the easel in the corner, with the canvas behind it, they will not be seen if he should chance to come into the room."

"He would not be angry, I suppose, if he saw them?"

"There is no knowing. Men are so unreasonable. All men are, I think. All those are whom I have had the fortune to know. Women generally say that men are selfish. I do not complain so much that they are selfish as that they

are thoughtless. They are headstrong and do not look forward to results. Now you,—I do not think you would willingly do me an injury?"

"I do not think I would."

"I am sure you would not;—but yet you would forget to save me from one."

"What injury?"

"Oh, never mind. I am not thinking of anything in particular. From myself, for instance. But we will not talk about that. That way madness lies. Tell me, Conway;—what do you think of Clara Van Siever?"

"She is very handsome, certainly."

"And clever?"

"Decidedly clever. I should think she has a temper of her own."

"What woman is there worth a straw that has not? If Clara Van Siever were ill-used, she would resent it. I do not doubt that for a moment. I should not like to be the man who would do it."

"Nor I, either," said Conway.

"But there is plenty of feminine softness in that character, if she were treated with love and kindness. Conway, if you will take my advice you will ask Clara Van Siever to be your wife. But perhaps you have already."

"Who; I?"

"Yes; you."

"I have not done it yet, certainly, Mrs. Broughton."

"And why should you not do it?"

"There are two or three reasons;—but perhaps none of any great importance. Do you know of none, Mrs. Broughton?"

"I know of none," said Mrs. Broughton in a very serious,—in almost a tragic tone;—"of none that should weigh for a moment. As far as I am concerned, nothing would give me more pleasure."

"That is so kind of you!"

"I mean to be kind. I do, indeed, Conway. I know it will

be better for you that you should be settled,—very much better. And it will be better for me. I do not mind admitting that;—though in saying so I trust greatly to your generosity to interpret my words properly."

"I shall not flatter myself, if you mean that."

"There is no question of flattery, Conway. The question is simply of truth and prudence. Do you not know that it would be better that you should be married?"

"Not unless a certain gentleman were to die first," said Conway Dalrymple, as he deposited the last of his painting paraphernalia in the recess which had been prepared for them by Mrs. Broughton.

"Conway, how can you speak in that wicked, wicked way!"

"I can assure you I do not wish the gentleman in question the slightest harm in the world. If his welfare depended on me, he should be as safe as the Bank of England."

"And you will not take my advice?"

"What advice?"

"About Clara?"

"Mrs. Broughton, matrimony is a very important thing."

"Indeed, it is;—oh, who can say how important! There was a time, Conway, when I thought you had given your heart to Madalina Demolines."

"Heaven forbid!"

"And I grieved, because I thought that she was not worthy of you."

"There was never anything in that, Mrs. Broughton."

"She thought that there was. At any rate, she said so. I know that for certain. She told me so herself. But let that pass. Clara Van Siever is in every respect very different from Madalina. Clara, I think, is worthy of you. And Conway,—of course it is not for me to dictate to you; but this I must tell you——" Then she paused, as though she did not know how to finish her sentence.

"What must you tell me?"

"I will tell you nothing more. If you cannot understand what I have said, you must be more dull of comprehension than I believe you to be. Now go. Why are you not gone this half-hour?"

"How could I go while you were giving me all this good advice?"

"I have not asked you to stay. Go now, at any rate. And, remember, Conway, if this picture is to go on, I will not have you remaining here after the work is done. Will you remember that?" And she held him by the hand while he declared that he would remember it.

Mrs. Dobbs Broughton was no more in love with Conway Dalrymple than she was in love with King Charles on horseback at Charing Cross. And, over and beyond the protection which came to her in the course of nature from unimpassioned feelings in this special phase of her life,—and indeed, I may say, in every phase of her life,—it must be acknowledged on her behalf that she did enjoy that protection which comes from what we call principle, though the principle was not perhaps very high of its kind. Madalina Demolines had been right when she talked of her friend Maria's principles. Dobbs Broughton had been so far lucky in that jump in the dark which he had made in taking a wife to himself, that he had not fallen upon a really vicious woman, or upon a woman of strong feeling. If it had come to be the lot of Mrs. Dobbs Broughton to have six hours' work to do every day of her life, I think that the work would have been done badly, but that it would have kept her free from all danger. As it was she had nothing to do. She had no child. She was not given to much reading. She could not sit with a needle in her hand all day. She had no aptitude for May meetings, or the excitement of charitable good works. Life with her was very dull, and she found no amusement within her reach so easy and so pleasant as the amusement of pretending to be in love. If all that she did and all that she said could only

have been taken for its worth and for nothing more, by the different persons concerned, there was very little in it to flatter Mr. Dalrymple or to give cause for tribulation to Mr. Broughton. She probably cared but little for either of them. She was one of those women to whom it is not given by nature to care very much for anybody. But, of the two, she certainly cared the most for Mr. Dobbs Broughton,—because Mr. Dobbs Broughton belonged to her. As to leaving Mr. Dobbs Broughton's house, and putting herself into the hands of another man,—no Imogen of a wife was ever less likely to take a step so wicked, so dangerous, and so generally disagreeable to all the parties concerned.

But Conway Dalrymple,—though now and again he had got a side glance at her true character with clear-seeing eyes,—did allow himself to be flattered and deceived. He knew that she was foolish and ignorant, and that she often talked wonderful nonsense. He knew also that she was continually contradicting herself,—as when she would strenuously beg him to leave her, while she would continue to talk to him in a strain that prevented the possibility of his going. But, nevertheless, he was flattered, and he did believe that she loved him. As to his love for her,—he knew very well that it amounted to nothing. Now and again, perhaps twice a week, if he saw her as often, he would say something which would imply a declaration of affection. He felt that as much as that was expected from him, and that he ought not to hope to get off cheaper. And now that this little play was going on about Miss Van Siever, he did think that Mrs. Dobbs Broughton was doing her very best to overcome an unfortunate attachment. It is so gratifying to a young man's feelings to suppose that another man's wife has conceived an unfortunate attachment for him! Conway Dalrymple ought not to have been fooled by such a woman; but I fear that he was fooled by her.

As he returned home to-day from Mrs. Broughton's

house to his own lodgings he rambled out for a while into Kensington Gardens, and thought of his position seriously. "I don't see why I should not marry her," he said to himself, thinking of course of Miss Van Siever. "If Maria is not in earnest it is not my fault. And it would be my wish that she should be in earnest. If I suppose her to be so, and take her at her word, she can have no right to quarrel with me. Poor Maria! at any rate it will be better for her, for no good can come of this kind of thing. And, by heavens, with a woman like that, of strong feelings, one never knows what may happen." And then he thought of the condition he would be in, if he were to find her some fine day in his own rooms, and if she were to tell him that she could not go home again, and that she meant to remain with him!

In the meantime Mrs. Dobbs Broughton had gone down into her own drawing-room, had tucked herself up on the sofa, and had fallen fast asleep.

CHAPTER XXXIX

A New Flirtation

JOHN EAMES sat at his office on the day after his return to London, and answered the various letters which he had found waiting for him at his lodgings on the previous evening. To Miss Demolines he had already written from his club,—a single line, which he considered to be appropriate to the mysterious necessities of the occasion. "I will be with you at a quarter to six to-morrow.—J. E. Just returned." There was not another word; and as he scrawled it at one of the club tables while two or three men were talking to him, he felt rather proud of his correspondence. "It was capital fun," he said; "and after all,"—the "all" on this occasion being Lily Dale,

and the sadness of his disappointment at Allington,—"after all, let a fellow be ever so down in the mouth, a little amusement should do him good." And he reflected further that the more a fellow be "down in the mouth," the more good the amusement would do him. He sent off his note, therefore, with some little inward rejoicing,—and a word or two also of spoken rejoicing. "What fun women are sometimes," he said to one of his friends,—a friend with whom he was very intimate, calling him always Fred, and slapping his back, but whom he never by any chance saw out of his club.

"What's up now, Johnny? Some good fortune?"

"Good fortune; no. I never have good fortunes of that kind. But I've got hold of a young woman,—or rather a young woman has got hold of me, who insists on having a mystery with me. In the mystery itself there is not the slightest interest. But the mysteriousness of it is charming. I have just written to her three words to settle an appointment for to-morrow. We don't sign our names lest the Postmaster-General should find out all about it."

"Is she pretty?"

"Well;—she isn't ugly. She has just enough of good looks to make the sort of thing pass off pleasantly. A mystery with a downright ugly young woman would be unpleasant."

After this fashion the note from Miss Demolines had been received, and answered at once, but the other letters remained in his pocket till he reached his office on the following morning. Sir Raffle had begged him to be there at half-past nine. This he had sworn he would not do; but he did seat himself in his room at ten minutes before ten, finding of course the whole building untenanted at that early hour,—that unearthly hour, as Johnny called it himself. "I shouldn't wonder if he really is here this morning," Johnny said, as he entered the building, "just that he may have an opportunity of jumping on me." But Sir Raffle was not there, and then Johnny began to abuse Sir Raffle.

"If ever I come here early to meet him again, because he says he means to be here himself, I hope I may be —— blessed." On that especial morning it was twelve before Sir Raffle made his appearance, and Johnny avenged himself,—I regret to have to tell it,—by a fib. That Sir Raffle fibbed first, was no valid excuse whatever for Eames.

"I've been at it ever since six o'clock," said Sir Raffle.

"At what?" said Johnny.

"Work, to be sure;—and very hard work too. I believe the Chancellor of the Exchequer thinks that he can call upon me to any extent that he pleases;—just any extent that he pleases. He doesn't give me credit for a desire to have a single hour to myself."

"What would he do, Sir Raffle, if you were to get ill, or wear yourself out?"

"He knows I'm not one of the wearing-out sort. You got my note last night?"

"Yes; I got your note."

"I'm sorry that I troubled you; but I couldn't help it. I didn't expect to get a box full of papers at eleven o'clock last night."

"You didn't put me out, Sir Raffle; I happened to have business of my own which prevented the possibility of my being here early."

This was the way in which John Eames avenged himself. Sir Raffle turned his face upon his private secretary, and his face was very black. Johnny bore the gaze without dropping an eyelid. "I'm not going to stand it, and he may as well know that at once," Johnny said to one of his friends in the office afterwards. "If he ever wants any thing really done, I'll do it;—though it should take me twelve hours at a stretch. But I'm not going to pretend to believe all the lies he tells me about the Chancellor of the Exchequer. If that is to be part of the private secretary's business, he had better get somebody else." But now Sir Raffle was very angry, and his countenance was full of wrath as he looked down upon his subordinate minister.

"If I had come here, Mr. Eames, and had found you absent, I should have been very much annoyed, very much annoyed indeed, after having written as I did."

"You would have found me absent at the hour you named. As I wasn't here then, I think it's only fair to say so."

"I'm afraid you begrudge your time to the service, Mr. Eames."

"I do begrudge it when the service doesn't want it."

"At your age, Mr. Eames, that's not for you to judge. If I had acted in that way when I was young I should never have filled the position I now hold. I always remembered in those days that as I was the hand and not the head, I was bound to hold myself in readiness whether work might be required from me or not."

"If I'm wanted as hand now, Sir Raffle, I'm ready."

"That's all very well;—but why were you not here at the hour I named?"

"Well, Sir Raffle, I cannot say that the Chancellor of the Exchequer detained me;—but there was business. As I've been here for the last two hours, I am happy to think that in this instance the public service will not have suffered from my disobedience."

Sir Raffle was still standing with his hat on, and with his back to the fire, and his countenance was full of wrath. It was on his tongue to tell Johnny that he had better return to his former work in the outer office. He greatly wanted the comfort of a private secretary who would believe in him—or at least pretend to believe in him. There are men who, though they have not sense enough to be true, have nevertheless sense enough to know that they cannot expect to be really believed in by those who are near enough to them to know them. Sir Raffle Buffle was such a one. He would have greatly delighted in the services of some one who would trust him implicitly,—of some young man who would really believe all that he said of himself and of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but he was wise enough

to perceive that no such young man was to be had; or that any such young man,—could such a one be found,—would be absolutely useless for any purposes of work. He knew himself to be a liar whom nobody trusted. And he knew himself also to be a bully,—though he could not think so low of himself as to believe that he was a bully whom nobody feared. A private secretary was at the least bound to pretend to believe in him. There is a decency in such things, and that decency John Eames did not observe. He thought that he must get rid of John Eames, in spite of certain attractions which belonged to Johnny's appearance and general manners, and social standing, and reputed wealth. But it would not be wise to punish a man on the spot for breaking an appointment which he himself had not kept, and therefore he would wait for another opportunity. "You had better go to your own room now," he said. "I am engaged on a matter connected with the Treasury, in which I will not ask for your assistance." He knew that Eames would not believe a word as to what he said about the Treasury,—not even some very trifling base of truth which did exist; but the boast gave him an opportunity of putting an end to the interview after his own fashion. Then John Eames went to his own room and answered the letters which he had in his pocket.

To the club dinner he would not go. "What's the use of paying two guineas for a dinner with fellows you see every day of your life?" he said. To Lady Glencora's he would go, and he wrote a line to his friend Dalrymple proposing that they should go together. And he would dine with his cousin Toogood in Tavistock Square. "One meets the queerest people in the world there," he said; "but Tommy Toogood is such a good fellow himself!" After that he had his lunch. Then he read the paper, and before he went away he wrote a dozen or two of private notes, presenting Sir Raffle's compliments right and left, and giving in no one note a single word of information that could be of any use to any person. Having thus earned his salary by half-

past four o'clock he got into a hansom cab and had himself driven to Porchester Terrace. Miss Demolines was at home, of course, and he soon found himself closeted with that interesting young woman.

"I thought you never would have come." These were the first words she spoke.

"My dear Miss Demolines, you must not forget that I have my bread to earn."

"Fiddlestick—bread! As if I didn't know that you can get away from your office when you choose."

"But, indeed, I cannot."

"What is there to prevent you, Mr. Eames?"

"I'm not tied up like a dog, certainly; but who do you suppose will do my work if I do not do it myself? It is a fact, though the world does not believe it, that men in public offices have got something to do."

"Now you are laughing at me, I know; but you are welcome, if you like it. It's the way of the world just at present that ladies should submit to that sort of thing from gentlemen."

"What sort of thing, Miss Demolines?"

"Chaff,—as you call it. Courtesy is out of fashion, and gallantry has come to signify quite a different kind of thing from what it used to do."

"The Sir Charles Grandison business is done and gone. That's what you mean, I suppose? Don't you think we should find it very heavy if we tried to get it back again?"

"I'm not going to ask you to be a Sir Charles Grandison, Mr. Eames. But never mind all that now. Do you know that that girl has absolutely had her first sitting for the picture?"

"Has she, indeed?"

"She has. You may take my word for it. I know it as a fact. What a fool that young man is!"

"Which young man?"

"Which young man! Conway Dalrymple to be sure.

Artists are always weak. Of all men in the world they are the most subject to flattery from women; and we all know that Conway Dalrymple is very vain."

"Upon my word I didn't know it," said Johnny.

"Yes, you do. You must know it. When a man goes about in a purple velvet coat of course he is vain."

"I certainly cannot defend a purple velvet coat."

"That is what he wore when this girl sat to him this morning."

"This morning was it?"

"Yes; this morning. They little think that they can do nothing without my knowing it. He was there for nearly four hours, and she was dressed up in a white robe as Jael, with a turban on her head. Jael, indeed! I call it very improper, and I am quite astonished that Maria Clutterbuck should have lent herself to such a piece of work. That Maria was never very wise, of course we all know; but I thought that she had principle enough to have kept her from this kind of thing."

"It's her fevered existence," said Johnny.

"That is just it. She must have excitement. It is like dram-drinking. And then, you know, they are always living in the crater of a volcano."

"Who are living in the crater of a volcano?"

"The Dobbs Broughtons are. Of course they are. There is no saying what day a smash may come. These City people get so used to it that they enjoy it. The risk is every thing to them."

"They like to have a little certainty behind the risk, I fancy."

"I'm afraid there is very little that's certain with Dobbs Broughton. But about this picture, Mr. Eames. I look to you to assist me there. It must be put a stop to. As to that I am determined. It must be—put a—stop to." And as Miss Demolines repeated these last words with tremendous emphasis she leant with both her elbows on a little table that stood between her and her visitor, and looked with

all her eyes into his face. "I do hope that you agree with me in that," said she.

"Upon my word I do not see the harm of the picture," said he.

"You do not?"

"Indeed, no. Why should not Dalrymple paint Miss Van Siever as well as any other lady? It is his special business to paint ladies."

"Look here, Mr. Eames.——" And now Miss Demolines, as she spoke, drew her own seat closer to that of her companion and pushed away the little table. "Do you suppose that Conway Dalrymple, in the usual way of his business, paints pictures of young ladies, of which their mothers know nothing? Do you suppose that he paints them in ladies' rooms without their husbands' knowledge? And in the common way of his business does he not expect to be paid for his pictures?"

"But what is all that to you and me, Miss Demolines?"

"Is the welfare of your friend nothing to you? Would you like to see him become the victim of the artifice of such a girl as Clara Van Siever?"

"Upon my word I think he is very well able to take care of himself."

"And would you wish to see that poor creature's domestic hearth ruined and broken up?"

"Which poor creature?"

"Dobbs Broughton, to be sure."

"I can't pretend that I care very much for Dobbs Broughton," said John Eames; "and you see I know so little about his domestic hearth."

"Oh, Mr. Eames!"

"Besides, her principles will pull her through. You told me yourself that Mrs. Broughton has high principles."

"God forbid that I should say a word against Maria Clutterbuck," said Miss Demolines, fervently. "Maria Clutterbuck was my early friend, and though words have been spoken which never should have been spoken, and

though things have been done which never should have been even dreamed of, still I will not desert Maria Clutterbuck in her hour of need. No, never!"

"I'm sure you're what one may call a trump to your friends, Miss Demolines."

"I have always endeavoured to be so, and always shall. You will find me so;—that is if you and I ever become intimate enough to feel that sort of friendship."

"There's nothing on earth I should like better," said Johnny. As soon as the words were out of his mouth he felt ashamed of himself. He knew that he did not in truth desire the friendship of Miss Demolines, and that any friendship with such a one would mean something different from friendship,—something that would be an injury to Lily Dale. A week had hardly passed since he had sworn a life's constancy to Lily Dale,—had sworn it, not to her only, but to himself; and now he was giving way to a flirtation with this woman, not because he liked it himself, but because he was too weak to keep out of it.

"If that is true——," said Miss Demolines.

"Oh, yes; it's quite true," said Johnny.

"Then you must earn my friendship by doing what I ask of you. That picture must not be painted. You must tell Conway Dalrymple as his friend that he must cease to carry on such an intrigue in another's man's house."

"You would hardly call painting a picture an intrigue; would you?"

"Certainly I would when it's kept a secret from the husband by the wife,—and from the mother by the daughter. If it cannot be stopped in any other way, I must tell Mrs. Van Siever;—I must, indeed. I have such an abhorrence of the old woman, that I could not bring myself to speak to her,—but I should write to her. That's what I should do."

"But what's the reason? You might as well tell me the real reason." Had Miss Demolines been christened Mary, or Fanny, or Jane, I think that John Eames would now

have called her by either of those names; but Madalina was such a mouthful that he could not bring himself to use it at once. He had heard that among her intimates she was called Maddy. He had an idea that he had heard Dalrymple in old times talk of her as Maddy Mullins, and just at this moment the idea was not pleasant to him; at any rate he could not call her Maddy as yet. "How am I to help you," he said, "unless I know all about it?"

"I hate that girl like poison!" said Miss Demolines, confidentially, drawing herself very near to Johnny as she spoke.

"But what has she done?"

"What has she done? I can't tell you what she has done. I could not demean myself by repeating it. Of course we all know what she wants. She wants to catch Conway Dalrymple. That's as plain as anything can be. Not that I care about that."

"Of course not," said Johnny.

"Not in the least. It's nothing to me. I have known Mr. Dalrymple no doubt, for a year or two, and I should be sorry to see a young man who has his good points sacrificed in that sort of way. But it is mere acquaintance between Mr. Dalrymple and me, and of course I cannot interfere."

"She'll have a lot of money, you know."

"He thinks so; does he? I suppose that is what Maria has told him. Oh, Mr. Eames, you don't know the meanness of women; you don't, indeed. Men are so much more noble."

"Are they, do you think?"

"Than some women. I see women doing things that really disgust me; I do, indeed;—things that I wouldn't do myself, were it ever so;—striving to catch men in every possible way, and for such purposes! I wouldn't have believed it of Maria Clutterbuck. I wouldn't indeed. However, I will never say a word against her, because she has been my friend. Nothing shall ever induce me."

John Eames before he left Porchester Terrace, had at last succeeded in calling his fair friend Madalina, and had promised that he would endeavour to open the artist's eyes to the folly of painting his picture in Broughton's house without Broughton's knowledge.

CHAPTER XL

Mr. Toogood's Ideas about Society

A DAY OR TWO after the interview which was described in the last chapter John Eames dined with his uncle Mr. Thomas Toogood, in Tavistock Square. He was in the habit of doing this about once a month, and was a great favourite both with his cousins and with their mother. Mr. Toogood did not give dinner-parties; always begging those whom he asked to enjoy his hospitality, to take pot luck, and telling young men whom he could treat with familiarity,—such as his nephew,—that if they wanted to be regaled à la Russe they must not come to number 75, Tavistock Square. "A leg of mutton and trimmings; that will be about the outside of it," he would say; but he would add in a whisper,—"and a glass of port such as you don't get every day of your life." Polly and Lucy Toogood were pretty girls, and merry withal, and certain young men were well contented to accept the attorney's invitations,—whether attracted by the promised leg of mutton or the port wine, or the young ladies, I will not attempt to say. But it had so happened that one young man, a clerk from John Eames' office, had partaken so often of the pot luck and port wine that Polly Toogood had conquered him by her charms, and he was now a slave, waiting an appropriate time for matrimonial sacrifice. William Summerkin was the young man's name; and as it was known that Mr. Summerkin was to inherit a fortune

amounting to five thousand pounds from his maiden aunt, it was considered that Polly Toogood was not doing amiss. "I'll give you three hundred pounds, my boy, just to put a few sheets on the beds," said Toogood the father, "and when the old birds are both dead she'll have a thousand pounds out of the nest. That's the extent of Polly's fortune; —so now you know." Summerkin was, however, quite contented to have his own money settled on his darling Polly, and the whole thing was looked at with pleasant and propitious eyes by the Toogood connection.

When John Eames entered the drawing-room Summerkin and Polly were already there. Summerkin blushed up to his eyes, of course, but Polly sat as demurely as though she had been accustomed to having lovers all her life. "Mamma will be down almost immediately, John," said Polly as soon as the first greetings were over, "and papa has come in, I know."

"Summerkin," said Johnny, "I'm afraid you left the office before four o'clock."

"No, I did not," said Summerkin. "I deny it."

"Polly," said her cousin, "you should keep him in better order. He will certainly come to grief if he goes on like this. I suppose you could do without him for half an hour."

"I don't want him, I can assure you," said Polly.

"I have only been here just five minutes," said Summerkin, "and I came because Mrs. Toogood asked me to do a commission."

"That's civil to you, Polly," said John.

"It's quite as civil as I wish him to be," said Polly. "And as for you, John, everybody knows that you're a goose, and that you always were a goose. Isn't he always doing foolish things at the office, William?" But as John Eames was rather a great man at the Income-tax Office, Summerkin would not fall into his sweetheart's joke on this subject, finding it easier and perhaps safer to twiddle the bodkins in Polly's work-basket. Then Toogood and Mrs.

Toogood entered the room together, and the lovers were able to be alone again during the general greeting with which Johnny was welcomed.

"You don't know the Silverbridge people,—do you?" asked Mr. Toogood. Eames said that he did not. He had been at Silverbridge more than once, but did not know very much of the Silverbridgians. "Because Walker is coming to dine here. Walker is the leading man in Silverbridge."

"And what is Walker;—besides being leading man in Silverbridge?"

"He's a lawyer. Walker and Winthrop. Everybody knows Walker in Barsetshire. I've been down at Barchester since I saw you."

"Have you indeed?" said Johnny.

"And I'll tell you what I've been about. You know Mr. Crawley; don't you?"

"The Hogglestock clergyman that has come to grief? I don't know him personally. He's a sort of cousin by marriage, you know."

"Of course he is," said Mr. Toogood. "His wife is my first-cousin, and your mother's first-cousin. He came here to me the other day;—or rather to the shop. I had never seen the man before in my life, and a very queer fellow he is too. He came to me about this trouble of his, and of course I must do what I can for him. I got myself introduced to Walker, who has the management of the prosecution, and I asked him to come here and dine to-day."

"And what sort of fellow did you find Crawley, uncle Tom?"

"Such a queer fish;—so unlike anybody else in the world!"

"But I suppose he did take the money?" said Johnny.

"I don't know what to say about it. I don't indeed. If he took it he didn't mean to steal it. I'm as sure that man didn't mean to steal twenty pounds as I ever could be of anything. Perhaps I shall get something about it out of Walker after dinner." Then Mr. Walker entered the room.

"This is very kind of you, Mr. Walker; very indeed. I take it quite as a compliment, your coming in in this sort of way. It's just pot luck, you know, and nothing else." Mr. Walker of course assured his host that he was delighted. "Just a leg of mutton and a bottle of old port, Mr. Walker," continued Toogood. "We never get beyond that in the way of dinner-giving; do we, Maria?"

But Maria was at this moment descanting on the good luck of the family to her nephew,—and on one special piece of good luck which had just occurred. Mr. Summerkin's maiden aunt had declared her intention of giving up the fortune to the young people at once. She had enough to live upon, she said, and would therefore make two lovers happy. "And they're to be married on the first of May," said Lucy,—that Lucy of whom her father had boasted to Mr. Crawley that she knew Byron by heart,—"and won't that be jolly? Mamma is going out to look for a house for them to-morrow. Fancy Polly with a house of her own! Won't it be stunning? I wish you were going to be married too, Johnny."

"Don't be a fool, Lucy."

"Of course I know that you are in love. I hope you are not going to give over being in love, Johnny, because it is such fun."

"Wait till you're caught yourself, my girl."

"I don't mean to be caught till some great swell comes this way. And as great swells never do come into Tavistock Square I shan't have a chance. I'll tell you what I would like; I'd like to have a Corsair,—or else a Giaour;—I think a Giaour would be nicest. Only a Giaour wouldn't be a Giaour here, you know. Fancy a lover 'Who thundering comes on blackest steed, With slackened bit and hoof of speed.' Were not those the days to live in! But all that is over now, you know, and young people take houses in Woburn Place, instead of being locked up, or drowned, or married to a hideous monster behind a veil. I suppose it's better as it is, for some reasons."

"I think it must be more jolly, as you call it, Lucy."

"I'm not quite sure. I know I'd go back and be Medora, if I could. Mamma is always telling Polly that she must be careful about William's dinner. But Conrad didn't care for his dinner. 'Light toil! to cull and dress thy frugal fare! See, I have plucked the fruit that promised best.' "

"And how often do you think Conrad got drunk?"

"I don't think he got drunk at all. There is no reason why he should, any more than William. Come along, and take me down to dinner. After all, papa's leg of mutton is better than Medora's apples, when one is as hungry as I am."

The leg of mutton on this occasion consisted of soup, fish, and a bit of roast beef, and a couple of boiled fowls. "If I had only two children instead of twelve, Mr. Walker," said the host, "I'd give you a dinner à la Russe."

"I don't begrudge Mrs. Toogood a single arrow in her quiver on that score," said Mr. Walker.

"People are getting to be so luxurious that one can't live up to them at all," said Mrs. Toogood. "We dined out here with some new comers in the square only last week. We had asked them before, and they came quite in a quiet way,—just like this; and when we got there we found they'd four kinds of ices after dinner!"

"And not a morsel of food on the table fit to eat," said Toogood. "I never was so poisoned in my life. As for soup, —it was just the washings of the pastrycook's kettle next door."

"And how is one to live with such people, Mr. Walker?" continued Mrs. Toogood. "Of course we can't ask them back again. We can't give them four kinds of ices."

"But would that be necessary? Perhaps they haven't got twelve children."

"They haven't got any," said Toogood, triumphing; "not a chick belonging to them. But you see one must do as other people do. I hate anything grand. I wouldn't want more than this for myself, if bank-notes were as plenty as curl-papers."

"Nobody has any curl-papers now, papa," said Lucy.

"But I can't bear to be outdone," said Mr. Toogood. "I think it's very unpleasant,—people living in that sort of way. It's all very well telling me that I needn't live so too; —and of course I don't. I can't afford to have four men in from the confectioner's, dressed a sight better than myself, at ten shillings a head. I can't afford it, and I don't do it. But the worst of it is that I suffer because other people do it. It stands to reason that I must either be driven along with the crowd, or else be left behind. Now, I don't like either. And what's the end of it? Why, I'm half carried away and half left behind."

"Upon my word, papa, I don't think you're carried away at all," said Lucy.

"Yes, I am; and I'm ashamed of myself. Mr. Walker, I don't dare to ask you to drink a glass of wine with me in my own house,—that's what I don't,—because it's the proper thing for you to wait till somebody brings it you, and then to drink it by yourself. There is no knowing whether I mightn't offend you." And Mr. Toogood as he spoke grasped the decanter at his elbow. Mr. Walker grasped another at his elbow, and the two attorneys took their glass of wine together.

"A very queer case this is of my cousin Crawley's," said Toogood to Walker, when the ladies had left the dining-room.

"A most distressing case. I never knew anything so much talked of in our part of the country."

"He can't have been a popular man, I should say?"

"No; not popular,—not in the ordinary way;—anything but that. Nobody knew him personally before this matter came up."

"But a good clergyman, probably? I'm interested in the case, of course, as his wife is my first-cousin. You will understand, however, that I know nothing of him. My father tried to be civil to him once, but Crawley wouldn't have it at all. We all thought he was mad then. I suppose he has done his duty in his parish?"

"He has quarrelled with the bishop, you know,—out and out."

"Has he, indeed? But I'm not sure that I think so very much about bishops, Mr. Walker."

"That depends very much on the particular bishop. Some people say ours isn't all that a bishop ought to be, while others are very fond of him."

"And Mr. Crawley belongs to the former set; that's all?" said Mr. Toogood.

"No, Mr. Toogood; that isn't all. The worst of your cousin is that he has an aptitude to quarrel with everybody. He is one of those men who always think themselves to be ill-used. Now our dean, Dr. Arabin, has been his very old friend,—and as far as I can learn, a very good friend; but it seems that Mr. Crawley has done his best to quarrel with him too."

"He spoke of the dean in the highest terms to me."

"He may do that,—and yet quarrel with him. He'd quarrel with his own right hand, if he had nothing else to quarrel with. That makes the difficulty, you see. He'll take nobody's advice. He thinks that we're all against him."

"I suppose the world has been heavy on him, Mr. Walker?"

"The world has been very heavy on him," said John Eames, who had now been left free to join the conversation, Mr. Summerkin having gone away to his lady-love. "You must not judge him as you do other men."

"That is just it," said Mr. Walker. "And to what result will that bring us?"

"That we ought to stretch a point in his favour," said Toogood.

"But why?" asked the attorney from Silverbridge. "What do we mean when we say that one man isn't to be trusted as another? We simply imply that he is not what we call responsible."

"And I don't think Mr. Crawley is responsible," said Johnny.

"Then how can he be fit to have charge of a parish?" said Mr. Walker. "You see where the difficulty is. How it embarrasses one all round. The amount of evidence as to the cheque is, I think, sufficient to get a verdict in an ordinary case, and the Crown has no alternative but so to treat it. Then his friends come forward,—and from sympathy with his sufferings, I desire to be ranked among the number,—and say, 'Ah, but you should spare this man, because he is not responsible.' Were he one who filled no position requiring special responsibility, that might be very well. His friends might undertake to look after him, and the prosecution might perhaps be smothered. But Mr. Crawley holds a living, and if he escape he will be triumphant,—especially triumphant over the bishop. Now, if he has really taken this money, and if his only excuse be that he did not know when he took it whether he was stealing or whether he was not,—for the sake of justice that ought not to be allowed." So spoke Mr. Walker.

"You think he certainly did steal the money?" said Johnny.

"You have heard the evidence, no doubt?" said Mr. Walker.

"I don't feel quite sure about it, yet," said Mr. Toogood.

"Quite sure of what?" said Mr. Walker.

"That the cheque was dropped in his house."

"It was at any rate traced to his hands."

"I have no doubt about that," said Toogood.

"And he can't account for it," said Walker.

"A man isn't bound to show where he got his money," said Johnny. "Suppose that sovereign is marked," and Johnny produced a coin from his pocket, "and I don't know but what it is; and suppose it is proved to have belonged to some one who lost it, and then to be traced to my hands,—how am I to say where I got it? If I were asked, I should simply decline to answer."

"But a cheque is not a sovereign, Mr. Eames," said Walker. "It is presumed that a man can account for the

possession of a cheque. It may be that a man should have a cheque in his possession and not be able to account for it, and should yet be open to no grave suspicion. In such a case a jury has to judge. Here is the fact: that Mr. Crawley has the cheque, and brings it into use some considerable time after it is drawn; and the additional fact that the drawer of the cheque had lost it, as he thought, in Mr. Crawley's house, and had looked for it there, soon after it was drawn, and long before it was paid. A jury must judge; but, as a lawyer, I should say that the burden of disproof lies with Mr. Crawley."

"Did you find out anything, Mr. Walker," said Toogood, "about the man who drove Mr. Soames that day?"

"No,—nothing."

"The trap was from 'The Dragon' at Barchester, I think?"

"Yes,—from 'The Dragon of Wantly.'"

"A respectable sort of house?"

"Pretty well for that, I believe. I've heard that the people are poor," said Mr. Walker.

"Somebody told me that they'd had a queer lot about the house, and that three or four of them left just then. I think I heard that two or three men from the place went to New Zealand together. It just came out in conversation while I was in the inn-yard."

"I have never heard anything of it," said Mr. Walker.

"I don't say that it can help us."

"I don't see that it can," said Mr. Walker.

After that there was a pause, and Mr. Toogood pushed about the old port, and made some very stinging remarks as to the claret-drinking propensities of the age. "Gladstone claret the most of it is, I fancy," said Mr. Toogood. "I find that port wine which my father bought in the wood five-and-twenty years ago is good enough for me." Mr. Walker said that it was quite good enough for him, almost too good, and that he thought that he had had enough of it. The host threatened another bottle, and was up to draw the

cork,—rather to the satisfaction of John Eames, who liked his uncle's port,—but Mr. Walker stopped him. "Not a drop more for me," he said. "You are quite sure?" "Quite sure." And Mr. Walker moved towards the door.

"It's a great pity, Mr. Walker," said Toogood, going back to the old subject, "that this dean and his wife should be away."

"I understand that they will both be home before the trial," said Mr. Walker.

"Yes,—but you know how very important it is to learn beforehand exactly what your witnesses can prove and what they can't prove. And moreover, though neither the dean nor his wife might perhaps be able to tell us anything themselves, they might help to put us on the proper scent. I think I'll send somebody after them. I think I will."

"It would be a heavy expense, Mr. Toogood."

"Yes," said Toogood, mournfully, thinking of the twelve children; "it would be a heavy expense. But I never like to stick at a thing when it ought to be done. I think I shall send a fellow after them."

"I'll go," said Johnny.

"How can you go?"

"I'll make old Snuffle give me leave."

"But will that lessen the expense?" said Mr. Walker.

"Well, yes, I think it will," said John, modestly.

"My nephew is a rich man, Mr. Walker," said Toogood.

"That alters the case," said Mr. Walker. And thus, before they left the dining-room, it was settled that John Eames should be taught his lesson and should seek both Mrs. Arabin and Dr. Arabin on their travels.

CHAPTER XLI

Grace Crawley at Home

ON the morning after his return from London Mr. Crawley showed symptoms of great fatigue, and his wife implored him to remain in bed. But this he would not do. He would get up, and go out down to the brickfields. He had specially bound himself,—he said, to see that the duties of the parish did not suffer by being left in his hands. The bishop had endeavoured to place them in other hands, but he had persisted in retaining them. As he had done so he could allow no weariness of his own to interfere,—and especially no weariness induced by labours undertaken on his own behalf. The day in the week had come round on which it was his wont to visit the brick-makers, and he would visit them. So he dragged himself out of his bed and went forth amidst the cold storm of a harsh wet March morning. His wife well knew when she heard his first word on that morning that one of those terrible moods had come upon him which made her doubt whether she ought to allow him to go anywhere alone. Latterly there had been some improvement in his mental health. Since the day of his encounter with the bishop and Mrs. Proudie, though he had been as stubborn as ever, he had been less apparently unhappy, less depressed in spirits. And the journey to London had done him good. His wife had congratulated herself on finding him able to set about his work like another man, and he himself had experienced a renewal, if not of hope, at any rate, of courage, which had given him a comfort which he had recognized. His common-sense had not been very striking in his interview with Mr. Toogood, but yet he had talked more rationally then and had given a better account of the matter in hand than could have been expected from him for some weeks previously. But now that the labour was over, a reaction

had come upon him, and he went away from his house having hardly spoken a word to his wife after the speech which he had made about his duty to his parish.

I think that at this time nobody saw clearly the working of his mind,—not even his wife, who studied it very closely, who gave him credit for all his high qualities, and who had gradually learned to acknowledge to herself that she must distrust his judgment in many things. She knew that he was good and yet weak, that he was afflicted by false pride and supported by true pride, that his intellect was still very bright, yet so dismally obscured on many sides as almost to justify people in saying that he was mad. She knew that he was almost a saint, and yet almost a castaway through vanity and hatred of those above him. But she did not know that he knew all this of himself also. She did not comprehend that he should be hourly telling himself that people were calling him mad and were so calling him with truth. It did not occur to her that he could see her insight into him. She doubted as to the way in which he had got the cheque,—never imagining, however, that he had wilfully stolen it;—thinking that his mind had been so much astray as to admit of his finding it and using it without wilful guilt,—thinking also, alas, that a man who could so act was hardly fit for such duties as those which were entrusted to him. But she did not dream that this was precisely his own idea of his own state and of his own position;—that he was always inquiring of himself whether he was not mad; whether, if mad, he was not bound to lay down his office; that he was ever taxing himself with improper hostility to the bishop,—never forgetting for a moment his wrath against the bishop and the bishop's wife, still comforting himself with his triumph over the bishop and the bishop's wife,—but, for all that, accusing himself of a heavy sin and proposing to himself to go to the palace and there humbly to relinquish his clerical authority. Such a course of action he was proposing to himself, but not with any realized idea that he would so act. He was as a man who

walks along a river's bank thinking of suicide, calculating how best he might kill himself,—whether the river does not offer an opportunity too good to be neglected, telling himself that for many reasons he had better do so, suggesting to himself that the water is pleasant and cool, and that his ears would soon be deaf to the harsh noises of the world,—but yet knowing, or thinking that he knows, that he never will kill himself. So it was with Mr. Crawley. Though his imagination pictured to himself the whole scene,—how he would humble himself to the ground as he acknowledged his unfitness, how he would endure the small-voiced triumph of the little bishop, how, from the abjectness of his own humility, even from the ground on which he would be crouching, he would rebuke the loud-mouthed triumph of the bishop's wife; though there was no touch wanting to the picture which he thus drew,—he did not really propose to himself to commit this professional suicide. His wife, too, had considered whether it might be in truth becoming that he should give up his clerical duties, at any rate for a while; but she had never thought that the idea was present to his mind also.

Mr. Toogood had told him that people would say that he was mad; and Mr. Toogood had looked at him, when he declared for the second time that he had no knowledge whence the cheque had come to him, as though his words were to be regarded as the words of some sick child. "Mad!" he said to himself, as he walked home from the station that night. "Well; yes; and what if I am mad? When I think of all that I have endured my wonder is that I should not have been mad sooner." And then he prayed,—yes, prayed, that in his madness the Devil might not be too strong for him, and that he might be preserved from some terrible sin of murder or violence. What, if the idea should come to him in his madness that it would be well for him to slay his wife and his children? Only that was wanting to make him of all men the most unfortunate.

He went down among the brickmakers on the following

morning, leaving the house almost without a morsel of food, and he remained at Hoggle End for the greater part of the day. There were sick persons there with whom he prayed, and then he sat talking with rough men while they ate their dinners, and he read passages from the Bible to women while they washed their husbands' clothes. And for a while he sat with a little girl in his lap teaching the child her alphabet. If it were possible for him he would do his duty. He would spare himself in nothing, though he might suffer even to fainting. And on this occasion he did suffer,—almost to fainting, for as he returned home in the afternoon he was forced to lean from time to time against the banks on the road-side, while the cold sweat of weakness trickled down his face, in order that he might recover strength to go on a few yards. But he would persevere. If God would but leave to him mind enough for his work, he would go on. No personal suffering should deter him. He told himself that there had been men in the world whose sufferings were sharper even than his own. Of what sort had been the life of the man who had stood for years on the top of a pillar? But then the man on the pillar had been honoured by all around him. And thus, though he had thought of the man on the pillar to encourage himself by remembering how lamentable had been that man's suffering, he came to reflect that after all his own sufferings were perhaps keener than those of the man on the pillar.

When he reached home, he was very ill. There was no doubt about it then. He staggered to his arm-chair, and stared at his wife first, then smiled at her with a ghastly smile. He trembled all over, and when food was brought to him he could not eat it. Early on the next morning the doctor was by his bedside, and before that evening came he was delirious. He had been at intervals in this state for nearly two days, when Mrs. Crawley wrote to Grace, and though she had restrained herself from telling everything, she had written with sufficient strength to bring Grace at once to her father's bedside.

He was not so ill when Grace arrived but that he knew her, and he seemed to receive some comfort from her coming. Before she had been in the house an hour she was reading Greek to him, and there was no wandering in his mind as to the due emphasis to be given to the plaints of the injured heroines, or as to the proper meaning of the choruses. And as he lay with his head half buried in the pillows, he shouted out long passages, lines from tragic plays by the score, and for a while seemed to have all the enjoyment of a dear old pleasure placed newly within his reach. But he tired of this after a while, and then, having looked round to see that his wife was not in the room, he began to talk of himself.

"So you have been at Allington, my dear?"

"Yes, papa."

"Is it a pretty place?"

"Yes, papa;—very pretty."

"And they were good to you?"

"Yes, papa;—very good."

"Had they heard anything there about—me; of this trial that is to come on?"

"Yes, papa; they had heard of it."

"And what did they say? You need not think that you will shock me by telling me. They cannot say worse there than people have said here,—or think worse."

"They don't think at all badly of you at Allington, papa."

"But they must think badly of me if the magistrates were right?"

"They suppose that there has been a mistake;—as we all think."

"They do not try men at the assizes for mistakes."

"That you have been mistaken, I mean;—and the magistrates mistaken."

"Both cannot have been mistaken, Grace."

"I don't know how to explain myself, papa; but we all know that it is very sad, and are quite sure that you have

never meant for one moment to do anything that was wrong."

"But people when they are,—you know what I mean, Grace; when they are not themselves,—do things that are wrong without meaning it." Then he paused, while she remained standing by him with her hand on the back of his. She was looking at his face, which had been turned towards her while they were reading together, but which now was so far moved that she knew that his eyes could not be fixed upon hers. "Of course if the bishop orders it, it shall be so," he said. "It is quite enough for me that he is the bishop."

"What has the bishop ordered, papa?"

"Nothing at all. It is she who does it. He has given no opinion about it. Of course not. He has none to give. It is the woman. You go and tell her from me that in such a matter I will not obey the word of any woman living. Go at once, when I tell you."

Then she knew that her father's mind was wandering, and she knelt down by the bedside, still holding his hand.

"Grace," he said.

"Yes, papa, I am here."

"Why do you not do what I tell you?" And he sat upright in his bed. "I suppose you are afraid of the woman?"

"I should be afraid of her, dear papa."

"I was not afraid of her. When she spoke to me, I would have nothing to say to her;—not a word; not a word;—not a word." As he said this he waved his hands about. "But as for him,—if it must be, it must. I know I'm not fit for it. Of course I am not. Who is? But what has he ever done that he should be a dean? I beat him at everything; almost at everything. He got the Newdegate, and that was about all. Upon my word I think that was all."

"But Dr. Arabin loves you truly, dear papa."

"Love me! psha! Does he ever come here to tea, as he used to do? No! I remember buttering toast for him down

on my knees before the fire, because he liked it,—and keeping all the cream for him. He should have had my heart's blood if he wanted it. But now;—look at his books, Grace. It's the outside of them he cares about. They are all gilt, but I doubt if he ever reads. As for her,—I will not allow any woman to tell me my duty. No;—by my Maker; not even your mother, who is the best of women. And as for her, with her little husband dangling at her apron-strings, as a call-whistle to be blown into when she pleases, —that she should dare to teach me my duty! No! The men in the jury-box may decide it how they will. If they can believe a plain story, let them! If not,—let them do as they please. I am ready to bear it all."

"Dear papa, you are tired. Will you not try to sleep?"

"Tell Mrs. Proudie what I say; and as for Arabin's money, I took it. I know I took it. What would you have had me do? Shall I—see them—all—starve?" Then he fell back upon his bed and did sleep.

The next day he was better, and insisted upon getting out of bed, and on sitting in his old arm-chair over the fire. And the Greek books were again had out; and Grace, not at all unwillingly, was put through her facings. "If you don't take care, my dear," he said, "Jane will beat you yet. She understands the force of the verbs better than you do."

"I am very glad that she is doing so well, papa. I am sure I shall not begrudge her her superiority."

"Ah, but you should begrudge it her!" Jane was sitting by at the time, and the two sisters were holding each other by the hand. "Always to be best;—always to be in advance of others. That should be your motto."

"But we can't both be best, papa," said Jane.

"You can both strive to be best. But Grace has the better voice. I remember when I knew the whole of the Antigone by heart. You girls should see which can learn it first."

"It would take such a long time," said Jane.

"You are young, and what can you do better with your leisure hours? Fie, Jane! I did not expect that from you. When I was learning it I had eight or nine pupils, and read an hour a day with each of them. But I think that nobody works now as they used to work then. Where is your mamma? Tell her I think I could get out as far as Mrs. Cox's, if she would help me to dress." Soon after this he was in bed again, and his head was wandering; but still they knew that he was better than he had been.

"You are more of a comfort to your papa than I can be," said Mrs. Crawley to her eldest daughter that night as they sat together, when everybody else was in bed.

"Do not say that, mamma. Papa does not think so."

"I cannot read Greek plays to him as you can do. I can only nurse him in his illness and endeavour to do my duty. Do you know, Grace, that I am beginning to fear that he half doubts me?"

"Oh, mamma!"

"That he half doubts me, and is half afraid of me. He does not think as he used to do, that I am altogether, heart and soul, on his side, I can see it in his eye as he watches me. He thinks that I am tired of him,—tired of his sufferings, tired of his poverty, tired of the evil which men say of him. I am not sure but what he thinks that I suspect him."

"Of what, mamma?"

"Of general unfitness for the work he has to do. The feeling is not strong as yet, but I fear that he will teach himself to think that he has an enemy at his hearth,—not a friend. It will be the saddest mistake he ever made."

"He told me to-day that you were the best of women. Those were his very words."

"Were they, my dear? I am glad at least that he should say so to you. He has been better since you came;—a great deal better. For one day I was frightened; but I am sorry now that I sent for you."

"I am so glad mamma; so very glad."

"You were happy there,—and comfortable. And if they

were glad to have you, why should I have brought you away?"

"But I was not happy;—even though they were very good to me. How could I be happy there when I was thinking of you and papa and Jane here at home? Whatever there is here, I would sooner share it with you than be anywhere else,—while this trouble lasts."

"My darling!—it is a great comfort to see you again."

"Only that I knew that one less in the house would be saving to you I should not have gone. When there is unhappiness, people should stay together;—shouldn't they, mamma?" They were sitting quite close to each other, on an old sofa in a small upstairs room, from which a door opened into the larger chamber in which Mr. Crawley was lying. It had been arranged between them that on this night Mrs. Crawley should remain with her husband, and that Grace should go to her bed. It was now past one o'clock, but she was still there, clinging to her mother's side, with her mother's arm drawn round her. "Mamma," she said, when they had both been silent for some ten minutes, "I have got something to tell you."

"To-night?"

"Yes, mamma; to-night, if you will let me."

"But you promised that you would go to bed. You were up all last night."

"I am not sleepy, mamma."

"Of course you shall tell me what you please, dearest. Is it a secret? Is it something I am not to repeat?"

"You must say how that ought to be, mamma. I shall not tell it to any one else."

"Well, dear?"

"Sit comfortably, mamma;—there; like that, and let me have your hand. It's a terrible story to have to tell."

"A terrible story, Grace?"

"I mean that you must not draw away from me. I shall want to feel that you are quite close to me. Mamma, while I was at Allington, Major Grantly came there."

"Did he, my dear?"

"Yes, mamma."

"Did he know them before?"

"No, mamma; not at the Small House. But he came there—to see me. He asked me—to be his wife. Don't move, mamma."

"My darling child! I won't move, dearest. Well; and what did you say to him? God bless him, at any rate. May God bless him, because he has seen with a true eye, and felt with a noble instinct. It is something, Grace, to have been wooed by such a man at such a time."

"Mamma, it did make me feel proud; it did."

"You had known him well before,—of course? I knew that you and he were friends, Grace."

"Yes, we were friends. I always liked him. I used not to know what to think about him. Miss Anne Prettyman told me that it would be so; and once before I thought so myself."

"And had you made up your mind what to say to him?"

"Yes, I had then. But I did not say it."

"Did not say what you had made up your mind to say?"

"That was before all this had happened to papa."

"I understand you, dearest."

"When Miss Anne Prettyman told me that I should be ready with my answer, and when I saw that Miss Prettyman herself used to let him come to the house and seemed to wish that I should see him when he came, and when he once was—so very gentle and kind, and when he said that he wanted me to love Edith,—— Oh, mamma!"

"Yes, darling, I know. Of course you loved him."

"Yes, mamma. And I do love him. How could one not love him?"

"I love him,—for loving you."

"But, mamma, one is bound not to do a harm to any one that one loves. So when he came to Allington I told him that I could not be his wife."

"Did you, my dear?"

"Yes; I did. Was I not right? Ought I to go to him to bring a disgrace upon all the family, just because he is so good that he asks me? Shall I injure him because he wants to do me a service?"

"If he loves you, Grace, the service he will require will be your love in return."

"That is all very well, mamma,—in books; but I do not believe it in reality. Being in love is very nice, and in poetry they make it out to be everything. But I do not think I should make Major Grantly happy if when I became his wife his own father and mother would not see him. I know I should be so wretched, myself, that I could not live."

"But would it be so?"

"Yes;—I think it would. And the archdeacon is very rich, and can leave all his money away from Major Grantly if he pleases. Think what I should feel if I were the cause of Edith losing her fortune!"

"But why do you suppose these terrible things?"

"I have a reason for supposing them. This must be a secret. Miss Anne Prettyman wrote to me."

"I wish Miss Anne Prettyman's hand had been in the fire."

"No, mamma; no; she was right. Would not I have wished, do you think, to have learned all the truth about the matter before I answered him? Besides, it made no difference. I could have made no other answer while papa is under such a terrible ban. It is no time for us to think of being in love. We have got to love each other. Isn't it so, mamma?" The mother did not answer in words, but slipping down on her knees before her child threw her arms round her girl's body in a close embrace. "Dear mamma; dearest mamma; this is what I wanted;—that you should love me!"

"Love you, my angel!"

"And trust me;—and that we should understand each

other, and stand close by each other. We can do so much to comfort one another;—but we cannot comfort other people."

"He must know that best himself, Grace;—but what did he say more to you?"

"I don't think he said anything more."

"He just left you then?"

"He said one thing more."

"And what was that?"

"He said;—but he had no right to say it."

"What was it, dear?"

"That he knew I loved him, and that therefore—— But, mamma, do not think of that. I will never be his wife, —never, in opposition to his family."

"But he did not take your answer?"

"He must take it, mamma. He shall take it. If he can be stubborn, so can I. If he knows how to think of me more than himself, I can think of him and Edith more than of myself. That is not quite all, mamma. Then he wrote to me. There is his letter."

Mrs. Crawley read the letter. "I suppose you answered it?"

"Yes, I answered it. It was very bad, my letter. I should think after that he will never want to have anything more to say to me. I tried for two days, but I could not write a nice letter."

"But what did you say?"

"I don't in the least remember. It does not in the least signify now, but it was such a bad letter."

"I daresay it was very nice."

"It was terribly stiff, and all about a gentleman."

"All about a gentleman! What do you mean, my dear?"

"Gentleman is such a frightful word to have to use to a gentleman; but I did not know what else to say. Mamma, if you please, we won't talk about it;—not about the letter I mean. As for him, I'll talk about him for ever if you like it. I don't mean to be a bit broken-hearted."

"It seems to me that he is a gentleman."

"Yes, mamma, that he is; and it is that which makes me so proud. When I think of it, I can hardly hold myself. But now I've told you everything, and I'll go away, and go to bed."

CHAPTER XLII

Mr. Toogood travels Professionally

MR. TOOGOOD paid another visit to Barsetshire, in order that he might get a little further information which he thought would be necessary before despatching his nephew upon the traces of Dean Arabin and his wife. He went down to Barchester after his work was over by an evening train, and put himself up at "The Dragon of Wantly," intending to have the whole of the next day for his work. Mr. Walker had asked him to come and take a return pot-luck dinner with Mrs. Walker at Silverbridge; and this he had said that he would do. After having "rummaged about for tidings" in Barchester, as he called it, he would take the train for Silverbridge, and would get back to town in time for business on the third day. "One day won't be much, you know," he said to his partner, as he made half an apology for absenting himself on business which was not to be in any degree remunerative. "That sort of thing is very well when one does it without any expense," said Crump. "So it is," said Toogood; "and the expense won't make it any worse." He had made up his mind, and it was not probable that anything Mr. Crump might say would deter him.

He saw John Eames before he started. "You'll be ready this day week, will you?" John Eames promised that he would. "It will cost you some forty pounds, I should say. By George,—if you have to go on to Jerusalem, it will

cost you more." In answer to this, Johnny pleaded that it would be as good as any other tour to him. He would see the world. "I'll tell you what," said Toogood; "I'll pay half. Only you mustn't tell Crump. And it will be quite as well not to tell Maria." But Johnny would hear nothing of this scheme. He would pay the entire cost of his own journey. He had lots of money, he said, and would like nothing better. "Then I'll run down," said Toogood, "and rummage up what tidings I can. As for writing to the dean, what's the good of writing to a man when you don't know where he is? Business letters always lie at hotels for two months, and then come back with double postage. From all I can hear, you'll stumble on her before you find him. If we do nothing else but bring him back, it will be a great thing to have the support of such a friend in the court. A Barchester jury won't like to find a man guilty who is hand-and-glove with the dean."

Mr. Toogood reached the "Dragon" about eleven o'clock, and allowed the boots to give him a pair of slippers and a candlestick. But he would not go to bed just at that moment. He would go into the coffee-room first, and have a glass of hot brandy-and-water. So the hot brandy-and-water was brought to him, and a cigar, and as he smoked and drank he conversed with the waiter. The man was a waiter of the ancient class, a grey-haired waiter, with seedy clothes, and a dirty towel under his arm; not a dapper waiter, with black shiny hair, and dressed like a guest for a dinner-party. There are two distinct classes of waiters, and as far as I have been able to perceive, the special status of the waiter in question cannot be decided by observation of the class of waiter to which he belongs. In such a town as Barchester you may find the old waiter with the dirty towel in the head inn, or in the second-class inn, and so you may the dapper waiter. Or you may find both in each, and not know which is senior waiter and which junior waiter. But for service I always prefer the old waiter with the dirty towel, and I find it more easy to satisfy him in the matter of

sixpences when my relations with the inn come to an end.

"Have you been here long, John?" said Mr. Toogood.

"A goodish many years, sir."

"So I thought, by the look of you. One can see that you belong in a way to the place. You do a good deal of business here, I suppose, at this time of the year?"

"Well, sir, pretty fair. The house ain't what it used to be, sir."

"Times are bad at Barchester,—are they?"

"I don't know much about the times. It's the people is worse than the times, I think. They used to like to have a little bit of dinner now and again at a hotel;—and a drop of something to drink after it."

"And don't they like it now?"

"I think they like it well enough, but they don't do it. I suppose it's their wives as don't let 'em come out and enjoy themselves. There used to be the Goose and Glee club;—that was once a month. They've gone and clean done away with themselves,—that club has. There's old Bumpter in the High Street,—he's the last of the old Geese. They died off, you see, and when Mr. Biddle died they wouldn't choose another president. A club for having dinner, sir, ain't nothing without a president."

"I suppose not."

"And there's the Freemasons. They must meet, you know, sir, in course, because of the dooties. But if you'll believe me, sir, they don't so much as wet their whistles. They don't indeed. It always used to be a supper, and that was once a month. Now they pays a rent for the use of the room! Who is to get a living out of that, sir?—not in the way of a waiter, that is."

"If that's the way things are going on I suppose the servants leave their places pretty often?"

"I don't know about that, sir. A man may do a deal worse than 'The Dragon of Wantly.' Them as goes away to better themselves, often worses themselves, as I call it. I've seen a good deal of that."

"And you stick to the old shop?"

"Yes, sir; I've been here fifteen year, I think it is. There's a many goes away, as doesn't go out of their own heads, you know, sir."

"They get the sack, you mean?"

"There's words between them and master,—or more likely, missus. That's where it is. Servants is so foolish. I often tell 'em how wrong folks are to say that soft words butter no parsnips, and hard words break no bones."

"I think you've lost some of the old hands here since this time last year, John?"

"You knows the house then, sir?"

"Well;—I've been here before."

"There was four of them went, I think it's just about twelve months back, sir."

"There was a man in the yard I used to know, and last time I was down here, I found that he was gone."

"There was one of 'em out of the yard, and two out of the house. Master and them had got to very high words. There was poor Scuttle, who had been post-boy at 'The Compasses' before he came here."

"He went away to New Zealand, didn't he?"

"B'leve he did, sir; or to some foreign parts. And Anne, as was under-chambermaid here; she went with him, fool as she was. They got theirselves married and went off, and he was well nigh as old as me. But seems he'd saved a little money, and that goes a long way with any girl."

"Was he the man who drove Mr. Soames that day the cheque was lost?" Mr. Toogood asked this question perhaps a little too abruptly. At any rate he obtained no answer to it. The waiter said he knew nothing about Mr. Soames, or the cheque, and the lawyer suspecting that the waiter was suspecting him, finished his brandy-and-water and went to bed.

Early on the following morning he observed that he was specially regarded by a shabby-looking man, dressed in black, but in a black suit that was very old, with a red nose,

whom he had seen in the hotel on the preceding day; and he learned that this man was a cousin of the landlord,—one Dan Stringer,—who acted as a clerk in the hotel bar. He took an opportunity also of saying a word to Mr. Stringer the landlord,—whom he found to be a somewhat forlorn and gouty individual, seated on cushions in a little parlour behind the bar. After breakfast he went out, and having twice walked round the Cathedral close and inspected the front of the palace and looked up at the windows of the prebendaries' houses, he knocked at the door of the deanery. The dean and Mrs. Arabin were on the Continent, he was told. Then he asked for Mr. Harding, having learned that Mr. Harding was Mrs. Arabin's father, and that he lived at the deanery. Mr. Harding was at home, but was not very well, the servant said. Mr. Toogood, however, persevered, sending up his card, and saying that he wished to have a few minutes' conversation with Mr Harding on very particular business. He wrote a word upon his card before giving it to the servant,—"about Mr. Crawley." In a few minutes he was shown into the library, and had hardly time, while looking at the shelves, to remember what Mr. Crawley had said of his anger at the beautiful bindings, before an old man, very thin and very pale, shuffled into the room. He stooped a good deal, and his black clothes were very loose about his shrunken limbs. He was not decrepit, nor did he seem to be one who had advanced to extreme old age; but yet he shuffled rather than walked, hardly raising his feet from the ground. Mr. Toogood, as he came forward to meet him, thought that he had never seen a sweeter face. There was very much of melancholy in it, of that soft sadness of age which seems to acknowledge, and in some sort to regret, the waning oil of life; but the regret to be read in such faces has in it nothing of the bitterness of grief; there is no repining that the end has come, but simply a touch of sorrow that so much that is dear must be left behind. Mr. Harding shook hands with his visitor, and invited him to sit down, and then seated

himself, folding his hands together over his knees, and he said a few words in a very low voice as to the absence of his daughter and of the dean.

"I hope you will excuse my troubling you," said Mr. Toogood.

"It is no trouble at all,—if I could be of any use. I don't know whether it is proper, but may I ask whether you call as,—as,—as a friend of Mr. Crawley's?"

"Altogether as a friend, Mr. Harding."

"I'm glad of that; though of course I am well aware that the gentlemen engaged on the prosecution must do their duty. Still,—I don't know,—somehow I would rather not hear them speak of this poor gentleman before the trial."

"You know Mr. Crawley, then?"

"Very slightly,—very slightly indeed. He is a gentleman not much given to social habits, and has been but seldom here. But he is an old friend whom my son-in-law loves dearly."

"I'm glad to hear you say that, Mr. Harding. Perhaps before I go any further I ought to tell you that Mrs. Crawley and I are first-cousins."

"Oh, indeed. Then you are a friend."

"I never saw him in my life till a few days ago. He is very queer you know,—very queer indeed. I'm a lawyer, Mr. Harding, practising in London;—an attorney, that is." At each separate announcement Mr. Harding bowed, and when Toogood named his special branch of his profession Mr. Harding bowed lower than before, as though desirous of showing that he had great respect for attorneys. "And of course I'm anxious, if only out of respect for the family, that my wife's cousin should pull through this little difficulty, if possible."

"And for the sake of the poor man himself too, and for his wife, and his children;—and for the sake of the cloth."

"Exactly; taking it all together it's such a pity, you know. I think, Mr. Harding, he can hardly have intended to steal the money."

"I'm sure he did not."

"It's very hard to be sure of anybody, Mr. Harding;—very hard."

"I feel quite sure that he did not. He has been a most pious, hard-working clergyman. I cannot bring myself to think that he is guilty. What does the Latin proverb say? 'No one of a sudden becomes most base.' "

"But the temptation, Mr. Harding, was very strong. He was awfully badgered about his debts. That butcher in Silverbridge was playing the mischief with him."

"All the butchers in Barsetshire could not make an honest man steal money, and I think that Mr. Crawley is an honest man. You'll excuse me for being a little hot about one of my own order."

"Why; he's my cousin,—or rather, my wife's. But the fact is, Mr. Harding, we must get hold of the dean as soon as possible; and I'm going to send a gentleman after him."

"To send a gentleman after him?" said Mr. Harding, almost in dismay.

"Yes; I think that will be best."

"I'm afraid he'll have to go a long way, Mr. Toogood."

"The dean, I'm told, is in Jerusalem."

"I'm afraid he is,—or on his journey there. He's to be there for the Easter week, and Sunday week will be Easter Sunday. But why should the gentleman want to go to Jerusalem after the dean?"

Then Mr. Toogood explained as well as he was able that the dean might have something to say on the subject which would serve Mr. Crawley's defence. "We shouldn't leave any stone unturned," said Mr. Toogood. "As far as I can judge, Crawley still thinks,—or half thinks,—that he got the cheque from your son-in-law." Mr. Harding shook his head sorrowfully. "I'm not saying he did, you know," continued Mr. Toogood. "I can't see myself how it is possible;—but still, we ought not to leave any stone unturned. And Mrs. Arabin,—can you tell me at all where we shall find her?"

"Has she anything to do with it, Mr. Toogood?"

"I can't quite say that she has, but it's just possible. As I said before, Mr. Harding, we mustn't leave a stone unturned. They're not expected here till the end of April?"

"About the 25th or 26th, I think."

"And the assizes are the 28th. The judges come into the city on that day. It will be too late to wait till then. We must have our defence ready, you know. Can you say where my friend will find Mrs. Arabin?"

Mr. Harding began nursing his knee, patting it and being very tender to it, as he sat meditating with his head on one side,—meditating not so much as to the nature of his answer as to that of the question. Could it be necessary that any emissary from a lawyer's office should be sent after his daughter? He did not like the idea of his Eleanor being disturbed by questions as to a theft. Though she had been twice married and had a son who was now nearly a man, still she was his Eleanor. But if it was necessary on Mr. Crawley's behalf, of course it must be done. "Her last address was at Paris, sir; but I think she has gone on to Florence. She has friends there, and she purposes to meet the dean at Venice on his return." Then Mr. Harding turned the table and wrote on a card his daughter's address.

"I suppose Mrs. Arabin must have heard of the affair?" said Mr. Toogood.

"She had not done so when she last wrote. I mentioned it to her the other day, before I knew that she had left Paris. If my letters and her sister's letters have been sent on to her, she must know it now."

Then Mr. Toogood got up to take his leave. "You will excuse me troubling you, I hope, Mr. Harding."

"Oh, sir, pray do not mention that. It is no trouble, if one could only be of any service."

"One can always try to be of service. In these affairs so much is to be done by rummaging about, as I always call it. There have been many theatrical managers, you know, Mr.

Harding, who have usually made up their pieces according to the dresses they have happened to have in their wardrobes."

"Have there, indeed, now? I never should have thought of that."

"And we lawyers have to do the same thing."

"Not with your clothes, Mr. Toogood?"

"Not exactly with our clothes;—but with our information."

"I do not quite understand you, Mr. Toogood."

"In preparing a defence we have to rummage about and get up what we can. If we can't find anything that suits us exactly, we are obliged to use what we do find as well as we can. I remember, when I was a young man, an ostler was to be tried for stealing some oats in the Borough; and he did steal them too, and sold them at a rag-shop regularly. The evidence against him was as plain as a pike-staff. All I could find out was that on a certain day a horse had trod on the fellow's foot. So we put it to the jury whether the man could walk as far as the rag-shop with a bag of oats when he was dead lame;—and we got him off."

"Did you though?" said Mr. Harding.

"Yes, we did."

"And he was guilty?"

"He had been at it regularly for months."

"Dear, dear, dear! Wouldn't it have been better to have had him punished for the fault,—gently; so as to warn him of the consequences of such doings?"

"Our business was to get him off,—and we got him off. It's my business to get my cousin's husband off, if I can, and we must do it, by hook or crook. It's a very difficult piece of work, because he won't let us employ a barrister. However, I shall have one in the court and say nothing to him about it at all. Good-by, Mr. Harding. As you say, it would be a thousand pities that a clergyman should be convicted of a theft;—and one so well connected too."

Mr. Harding, when he was left alone, began to turn the

matter over in his mind and to reflect whether the thousand pities of which Mr. Toogood had spoken appertained to the conviction of the criminal, or the doing of the crime. "If he did steal the money I suppose he ought to be punished, let him be ever so much a clergyman," said Mr. Harding to himself. But yet,—how terrible it would be! Of clergymen convicted of fraud in London he had often heard; but nothing of the kind had ever disgraced the diocese to which he belonged since he had known it. He could not teach himself to hope that Mr. Crawley should be acquitted if Mr. Crawley were guilty;—but he could teach himself to believe that Mr. Crawley was innocent. Something of a doubt had crept across his mind as he talked to the lawyer. Mr. Toogood, though Mrs. Crawley was his cousin, seemed to believe that the money had been stolen; and Mr. Toogood as a lawyer ought to understand such matters better than an old secluded clergyman in Barchester. But, nevertheless, Mr. Toogood might be wrong; and Mr. Harding succeeded in satisfying himself at last that he could not be doing harm in thinking that Mr. Toogood was wrong. When he had made up his mind on this matter he sat down and wrote the following letter, which he addressed to his daughter at the post-office in Florence:—

"Deanery, March —, 186—.

"DEAREST NELLY,—

"When I wrote on Tuesday I told you about poor Mr. Crawley, that he was the clergyman in Barsetshire of whose misfortune you read an account in Galignani's Messenger,—and I think Susan must have written about it also, because everybody here is talking of nothing else, and because, of course, we know how strong a regard the dean has for Mr. Crawley. But since that something has occurred which makes me write to you again,—at once. A gentleman has just been here, and has indeed only this moment left me, who tells me that he is an attorney in London, and that he is nearly related to Mrs.Crawley. He

seems to be a very good-natured man, and I daresay he understands his business as a lawyer. His name is Toogood, and he has come down as he says to get evidence to help the poor gentleman on his trial. I cannot understand how this should be necessary, because it seems to me that the evidence should all be wanted on the other side. I cannot for a moment suppose that a clergyman and a gentleman such as Mr. Crawley should have stolen money, and if he is innocent I cannot understand why all this trouble should be necessary to prevent a jury finding him guilty.

"Mr. Toogood came here because he wanted to see the dean,—and you also. He did not explain, as far as I can remember, why he wanted to see you; but he said it would be necessary, and that he was going to send off a messenger to find you first, and the dean afterwards. It has something to do with the money which was given to Mr. Crawley last year, and which, if I remember right, was your present. But of course Mr. Toogood could not have known anything about that. However, I gave him the address,—poste restante, Florence,—and I daresay that somebody will make you out before long, if you are still stopping at Florence. I did not like letting him go without telling you about it, as I thought that a lawyer's coming to you would startle you.

"The bairns are quite well, as I told you in my other letter, and Miss Jones says that little Elly is as good as gold. They are with me every morning and evening, and behave like darling angels, as they are. Posy is my own little jewel always. You may be quite sure I do nothing to spoil them.

"God bless you, dearest Nelly,

"Your most affectionate father,

"SEPTIMUS HARDING."

After this he wrote another letter to his other daughter, Mrs. Grantly, telling her also of Mr. Toogood's visit; and then he spent the remainder of the day thinking over the gravity of the occurrence. How terrible would it be if a

beneficed clergyman in the diocese should really be found guilty of theft by a jury from the city! And then he had always heard so high a character of this man from his son-in-law. No,—it was impossible to believe that Mr. Crawley had in truth stolen a cheque for twenty pounds!

Mr. Toogood could get no other information in Barchester, and went on to Silverbridge early in the afternoon. He was half disposed to go by Hogglestock and look up his cousin, whom he had never seen, and his cousin's husband, upon whose business he was now intent; but on reflection he feared that he might do more harm than good. He had quite appreciated the fact that Mr. Crawley was not like other men. "The man's not above half-saved," he had said to his wife,—meaning thereby to insinuate that the poor clergyman was not in full possession of his wits. And, to tell the truth of Mr. Toogood, he was a little afraid of his relative. There was a something in Mr. Crawley's manner, in spite of his declared poverty, and in spite also of his extreme humility, which seemed to announce that he expected to be obeyed when he spoke on any point with authority. Mr. Toogood had not forgotten the tone in which Mr. Crawley had said to him, "Sir, this thing you cannot do." And he thought that, upon the whole, he had better not go to Hogglestock on this occasion.

When at Silverbridge, he began at once to "rummage about." His chief rummaging was to be done at Mr. Walker's table; but before dinner he had time to call upon the magistrate's clerk, and ask a few questions as to the proceedings at the sitting from which Mr. Crawley was committed. He found a very taciturn old man, who was nearly as difficult to deal with in any rummaging process as a porcupine. But, nevertheless, at last he reached a state of conversation which was not absolutely hostile. Mr. Toogood pleaded that he was the poor man's cousin,—pleaded that, as the family lawyer, he was naturally the poor man's protector at such a time as the present,—pleaded also that as the poor man was so very poor, no one

else could come forward on his behalf,—and in this way somewhat softened the hard sharpness of the old porcupine's quills. But after all this, there was very little to be learned from the old porcupine. "There was not a magistrate on the bench," he said, "who had any doubt that the evidence was sufficient to justify them in sending the case to the assizes. They had all regretted,"—the porcupine said in his softest moment,—"that the gentleman had come there without a legal adviser." "Ah, that's been the mischief of it all!" said Mr. Toogood, dashing his hand against the porcupine's mahogany table. "But the facts were so strong, Mr. Toogood!" "Nobody there to soften 'em down, you know," said Mr. Toogood, shaking his head. Very little more than this was learned from the porcupine; and then Mr. Toogood went away, and prepared for Mr. Walker's dinner.

Mr. Walker had invited Dr. Tempest and Miss Anne Prettyman and Major Grantly to meet Mr. Toogood, and had explained, in a manner intended to be half earnest and half jocose, that though Mr. Toogood was an attorney, like himself, and was at this moment engaged in a noble way on behalf of his cousin's husband, without any idea of receiving back even the money which he would be out of pocket; still he wasn't quite,—not quite, you know—"not quite so much of a gentleman as I am,"—Mr. Walker would have said, had he spoken out freely that which he insinuated. But he contented himself with the emphasis he put upon the "not quite," which expressed his meaning fully. And Mr. Walker was correct in his opinion of Mr. Toogood. As regards the two attorneys I will not venture to say that either of them was not a "perfect gentleman." A perfect gentleman is a thing which I cannot define. But undoubtedly Mr. Walker was a bigger man in his way than was Mr. Toogood in his, and did habitually consort in the county of Barsetshire with men of higher standing than those with whom Mr. Toogood associated in London.

It seemed to be understood that Mr. Crawley was to be the general subject of conversation, and no one attempted to talk about anything else. Indeed, at this time, very little else was talked about in that part of the county;—not only because of the interest naturally attaching to the question of the suspected guilt of a parish clergyman, but because much had become lately known of Mr. Crawley's character, and because it was known also that an internecine feud had arisen between him and the bishop. It had undoubtedly become the general opinion that Mr. Crawley had picked up and used a cheque which was not his own;—that he had, in fact, stolen it; but there was in spite of that belief, a general wish that he might be acquitted and left in his living. And when the tidings of Mr. Crawley's victory over the bishop at the palace had become bruited about, popular sympathy went with the victor. The theft was, as it were, condoned, and people made excuses which were not always rational, but which were founded on the instincts of true humanity. And now the tidings of another stage in the battle, as fought against Mr. Crawley by the bishop, had gone forth through the county, and men had heard that the rural dean was to be instructed to make inquiries which should be preliminary to proceedings against Mr. Crawley in an ecclesiastical court. Dr. Tempest, who was now about to meet Mr. Toogood at Mr. Walker's, was the rural dean to whom Mr. Crawley would have to submit himself in any such inquiry; but Dr. Tempest had not as yet received from the bishop any official order on the subject.

"We are so delighted to think that you have taken up your cousin's case," said Mrs. Walker to Mr. Toogood, almost in a whisper.

"He is not just my cousin, himself," said Mr. Toogood, "but of course it's all the same thing. And as to taking up his case, you see, my dear madam, he won't let me take it up."

"I thought you had. I thought you were down here about it?"

"Only on the sly, Mrs. Walker. He has such queer ideas that he will not allow a lawyer to be properly employed; and you can't conceive how hard that makes it. Do you know him, Mrs. Walker?"

"We know his daughter Grace." And then Mrs. Walker whispered something further, which we may presume to have been an intimation that the gentleman opposite,—Major Grantly,—was supposed by some people to be very fond of Miss Grace Crawley.

"Quite a child, isn't she?" said Toogood, whose own daughter, now about to be married, was three or four years older than Grace.

"She's beyond being a child, I think. Of course she is young."

"But I suppose this affair will knock all that on the head," said the lawyer.

"I do not know how that may be; but they do say he is very much attached to her. The major is a man of family, and of course it would be very disagreeable if Mr. Crawley were found guilty."

"Very disagreeable, indeed; but, upon my word, Mrs. Walker, I don't know what to say about it."

"You think it will go against him, Mr. Toogood?" Mr. Toogood shook his head, and on seeing this, Mrs. Walker sighed deeply.

"I can only say that I have heard nothing from the bishop as yet," said Dr. Tempest, after the ladies had left the room. "Of course, if he thinks well to order it, the inquiry must be made."

"But how long would it take?" asked Mr. Walker.

"Three months, I should think,—or perhaps more. Of course Crawley would do all that he could to delay us, and I am not at all sure that we should be in any very great hurry ourselves."

"Who are the 'we,' doctor?" said Mr. Walker.

"I cannot make such an inquiry by myself, you know. I suppose the bishop would ask me to select two or four

other clergymen to act with me. That's the usual way of doing it. But you may be quite sure of this, Walker; the assizes will be over, and the jury have found their verdict long before we have settled our preliminaries."

"And what will be the good of your going on after that?"

"Only this good:—if the unfortunate man be convicted——"

"Which he won't," said Mr. Toogood, who thought it expedient to put on a bolder front in talking of the matter to the rural dean, than he had assumed in his whispered conversation with Mrs. Walker.

"I hope not, with all my heart," said the doctor. "But, perhaps, for the sake of the argument, the supposition may be allowed to pass."

"Certainly, sir," said Mr. Toogood. "For the sake of the argument, it may pass."

"If he be convicted, then, I suppose, there will be an end of the question. He would be sentenced for not less, I should say, than twelve months; and after that——"

"And would be as good a parson of Hogglestock when he came out of prison as when he went in," said Mr. Walker. "The conviction and judgment in a civil court would not touch his temporality."

"Certainly not," said Mr. Toogood.

"Of course not," said the doctor. "We all know that; and in the event of Mr. Crawley coming back to his parish it would be open to the bishop to raise the question as to his fitness for the duties."

"Why shouldn't he be as fit as any one else?" said Mr. Toogood.

"Simply because he would have been found to be a thief," said the doctor. "You must excuse me, Mr. Toogood, but it's only for the sake of the argument."

"I don't see what that has to do with it," said Mr. Toogood. "He would have undergone his penalty."

"It is preferable that a man who preaches from a pulpit

should not have undergone such a penalty," said the doctor. "But in practice, under such circumstances,—which we none of us anticipate, Mr. Toogood,—the living should no doubt be vacated. Mr. Crawley would probably hardly wish to come back. The jury will do their work before we can do ours,—will do it on a much better base than any we can have; and, when they have done it, the thing ought to be finished. If the jury acquit him, the bishop cannot proceed any further. If he be found guilty I think that the resignation of the living must follow."

"It is all spite, then, on the bishop's part?" said the major.

"Not at all," said the doctor. "The poor man is weak; that is all. He is driven to persecute because he cannot escape persecution himself. But it may really be a question whether his present proceeding is not right. If I were bishop I should wait till the trial was over; that is all."

From this and from much more that was said during the evening on the same subject Mr. Toogood gradually learned the position which Mr. Crawley and the question of Mr. Crawley's guilt really held in the county, and he returned to town resolved to go on with the case.

"I'll have a barrister down express, and I'll defend him in his own teeth," he said to his wife. "There'll be a scene in court, I daresay, and the man will call upon his own counsel to hold his tongue and shut up his brief; and, as far as I can see, counsel in such a case would have no alternative. But there would come an explanation,—how Crawley was too honourable to employ a man whom he could not pay, and there would be a romance, and it would all go down with the jury. One wants sympathy in such a case as that—not evidence."

"And how much will it cost, Tom?" said Maria, dolefully.

"Only a trifle. We won't think of that yet. There's John Eames is going all the way to Jerusalem, out of his pocket."

"But Johnny hasn't got twelve children, Tom."

"One doesn't have a cousin in trouble every day," said Toogood. "And then you see there's something very pretty in the case. It's quite a pleasure getting it up."

CHAPTER XLIII

Mr. Crosbie goes into the City

"I'VE known the City now for more than ten years, Mr. Crosbie, and I never knew money to be so tight as it is at this moment. The best commercial bills going can't be done under nine, and any other kind of paper can't so much as get itself looked at." Thus spoke Mr. Musselboro. He was seated in Dobbs Broughton's arm-chair in Dobbs Broughton's room in Hook Court, on the hind legs of which he was balancing himself comfortably; and he was communicating his experience in City matters to our old friend, Adolphus Crosbie,—of whom we may surmise that he would not have been there, at that moment, in Hook Court, if things had been going well with him. It was now past eleven o'clock, and he should have been at his office at the West End. His position in his office was no doubt high enough to place him beyond the reach of any special inquiry as to such absences; but it is generally felt that when the Crosbies of the West End have calls into the City about noon, things in the world are not going well with them. The man who goes into the City to look for money is generally one who does not know where to get money when he wants it. Mr. Musselboro on this occasion kept his hat on his head, and there was something in the way in which he balanced his chair which was in itself an offence to Mr. Crosbie's personal dignity. It was hardly as yet two months since Mr. Dobbs Broughton had assured him in that very room that there need not be the

slightest anxiety about his bill. Of course it could be renewed,—the commission being duly paid. As Mr. Dobbs Broughton explained on that occasion, that was his business. There was nothing he liked so much as renewing bills for such customers as Mr. Crosbie; and he was very candid at that meeting, explaining how he did this branch of his business, raising money on his own credit at four or five per cent., and lending it on his own judgment at eight or nine. Mr. Crosbie did not feel himself then called upon to exclaim that what he was called upon to pay was about twelve, perfectly understanding the comfort and grace of euphony; but he had turned it over in his mind, considering whether twelve per cent. was not more than he ought to be mulcted for the accommodation he wanted. Now, at the moment, he would have been glad to get it from Mr. Musselboro, without further words, for twenty.

Things had much changed with Adolphus Crosbie when he was driven to make morning visits to such a one as Mr. Musselboro with the view of having a bill renewed for two hundred and fifty pounds. In his early life he had always had the merit of being a careful man as to money. In some other respects he had gone astray very foolishly,—as has been partly explained in our earlier chapters; but up to the date of his marriage with Lady Alexandrina De Courcy he had never had dealings in Hook Court or in any such locality. Money troubles had then come upon him. Lady Alexandrina, being the daughter of a countess, had high ideas; and when, very shortly after his marriage, he had submitted to a separation from his noble wife, he had found himself and his income to be tied up inextricably in the hands of one Mr. Mortimer Gazebee, a lawyer who had married one of his wife's sisters. It was not that Mr. Gazebee was dishonest; nor did Crosbie suspect him of dishonesty; but the lawyer was so wedded to the interests of the noble family with which he was connected, that he worked for them all as an inferior spider might be supposed to work, which, from the infirmity of its nature, was

compelled by its instincts to be catching flies always for superior spiders. Mr. Mortimer Gazebee had in this way entangled Mr. Crosbie in his web on behalf of those noble spiders, the De Courcys, and our poor friend, in his endeavour to fight his way through the web, had fallen into the hands of the Hook Court firm of Mrs. Van Siever, Dobbs Broughton, and Musselboro.

"Mr. Broughton told me when I was last here," said Crosbie, "that there would be no difficulty about it."

"And it was renewed then; wasn't it?"

"Of course it was,—for two months. But he was speaking of a continuation of renewal."

"I'm afraid we can't do it, Mr. Crosbie. I'm afraid we can't, indeed. Money is so awful tight."

"Of course I must pay what you choose to charge me."

"It isn't that, Mr. Crosbie. The bill is out for collection, and must be collected. In times like these we must draw ourselves in a little, you know. Two hundred and fifty pounds isn't a great deal of money, you will say; but every little helps, you know; and, besides, of course we go upon a system. Business is business, and must not be made pleasure of. I should have had a great deal of pleasure in doing this for you, but it can't be done in the way of business."

"When will Broughton be here?"

"He may be in at any time;—I can't say when. I suppose he's down at the court now."

"What court?"

"Capel Court."

"I suppose I can see him there?" said Crosbie.

"If you catch him you can see him, of course. But what good will that do you, Mr. Crosbie? I tell you that we can't do it for you. If Broughton was here this moment it couldn't make the slightest difference."

Now Mr. Crosbie had an idea that Mr. Musselboro, though he sat in Dobbs Broughton's seat and kept on his hat, and balanced his chair on two legs, was in truth nothing more than a clerk. He did not quite understand the

manner in which the affairs of the establishment were worked, though he had been informed that Mrs. Van Siever was one of the partners. That Dobbs Broughton was the managing man, who really did the business, he was convinced; and he did not therefore like to be answered peremptorily by such a one as Musselboro. "I should wish to see Mr. Broughton," he said.

"You can call again,—or you can go down to the court if you like it. But you may take this as an answer from me that the bill can't be renewed by us." At this moment the door of the room was opened, and Dobbs Broughton himself came into it. His face was not at all pleasant, and any one might have seen with half an eye that the money-market was a great deal tighter than he liked it to be. "Here is Mr. Crosbie here,—about that bill," said Musselboro.

"Mr. Crosbie must take up his bill; that's all," said Dobbs Broughton.

"But it doesn't suit me to take it up," said Crosbie.

"Then you must take it up without suiting you," said Dobbs Broughton.

It might have been seen, I said, with half an eye, that Mr. Broughton did not like the state of the money-market; and it might also be seen with the other half that he had been endeavouring to mitigate the bitterness of his dislike by alcoholic aid. Musselboro at once perceived that his patron and partner was half drunk, and Crosbie was aware that he had been drinking. But, nevertheless, it was necessary that something more should be said. The bill would be due to-morrow,—was payable at Crosbie's bankers; and, as Mr. Crosbie too well knew, there were no funds there for the purpose. And there were other purposes, very needful, for which Mr. Crosbie's funds were at the present moment unfortunately by no means sufficient. He stood for a few moments thinking what he would do;—whether he would leave the drunken man and his office and let the bill take its chance, or whether he would make one more effort for an arrangement. He did not for a moment believe

that Broughton himself was subject to any pecuniary difficulty. Broughton lived in a big house, as rich men live, and had a name for commercial success. It never occurred to Crosbie that it was a matter of great moment to Dobbs Broughton himself that the bill should be taken up. Crosbie still thought that Musselboro was his special enemy, and that Broughton had joined Musselboro in his hostility simply because he was too drunk to know better. "You might, at any rate, answer me civilly, Mr. Broughton," he said.

"I know nothing about civility with things as they are at present," said Broughton. "Civil by——! There's nothing so civil as paying money when you owe it. Musselboro, reach me down the decanter and some glasses. Perhaps Mr. Crosbie will wet his whistle."

"He don't want any wine,—nor you either," said Musselboro.

"What's up now?" said Broughton, staggering across the room towards a cupboard, in which it was his custom to keep a provision of that comfort which he needed at the present moment. "I suppose I may stand a glass of wine to a fellow in my own room, if I like it."

"I will take no wine, thank you," said Crosbie.

"Then you can do the other thing. When I ask a gentleman to take a glass of wine, there is no compulsion. But about the bill there is compulsion. Do you understand that? You may drink, or let it alone; but pay you must. Why, Mussy, what d'ye think?—there's Carter, Ricketts and Carter;—I'm blessed if Carter just now didn't beg for two months, as though two months would be all the world to him, and that for a trumpery five hundred pounds. I never saw money like it is now; never." To this appeal, Musselboro made no reply, not caring, perhaps, at the present moment to sustain his partner. He still balanced himself in his chair, and still kept his hat on his head. Even Mr. Crosbie began to perceive that Mr. Musselboro's genius was in the ascendant in Hook Court.

"I can hardly believe," said Crosbie, "that things can be so bad that I cannot have a bill for two hundred and fifty pounds renewed when I am willing to pay for the accommodation. I have not done much in the way of bills, but I never had one dishonoured yet."

"Don't let this be the first," said Dobbs Broughton.

"Not if I can prevent it," said Crosbie. "But, to tell you the truth, Mr. Broughton, my bill will be dishonoured unless I can have it renewed. If it does not suit you to do it, I suppose you can recommend me to some one who can make it convenient."

"Why don't you go to your bankers?" said Musselboro.

"I never did ask my bankers for anything of the kind."

"Then you should try what your credit with them is worth," said Broughton. "It isn't worth much here, as you can perceive. Ha, ha, ha!"

Crosbie, when he heard this, became very angry; and Musselboro, perceiving this, got out of his chair, so that he might be in readiness to prevent any violence if violence were attempted. "It really is no good you're staying here," he said. "You see that Broughton has been drinking. There's no knowing what he may say or do."

"You be blowed," said Broughton, who had taken the arm-chair as soon as Musselboro had left it.

"But you may believe me in the way of business," continued Musselboro, "when I tell you that it really does not suit us to renew the bill. We're pressed ourselves, and we must press others."

"And who will do it for me?" said Crosbie, almost in despair.

"There are Burton and Bangles there, the wine-merchants down in the yard; perhaps they may accommodate you. It's all in their line; but I'm told they charge uncommon dear."

"I don't know Messrs. Burton and Bangles," said Crosbie.

"That needn't stand in your way. You tell them where

you come from, and they'll make inquiry. If they think it's about right, they'll give you the money; and if they don't, they won't."

Mr. Crosbie then left the office without exchanging another word with Dobbs Broughton, and went down into Hook Court. As he descended the stairs he turned over in his mind the propriety of going to Messrs. Burton and Bangles with the view of relieving himself from his present difficulty. He knew that it was ruinous. Dealings even with such men as Dobbs Broughton and Musselboro, whom he presumed to be milder in their greed than Burton and Bangles, were, all of them, steps on the road to ruin. But what was he to do? If his bill were dishonoured, the fact would certainly become known at his office, and he might even ultimately be arrested. In the doorway at the bottom of the stairs he stood for some moments, looking over at Burton and Bangles', and he did not at all like the aspect of the establishment. Inside the office he could see a man standing with a cigar in his mouth, very resplendent with a new hat,—with a hat remarkable for the bold upward curve of its rim, and this man was copiously decorated with a chain and seals hanging about widely over his waistcoat. He was leaning with his back against the counter, and was talking to some one on the other side of it. There was something in the man's look and manner that was utterly repulsive to Crosbie. He was more vulgar to the eye even than Musselboro, and his voice, which Crosbie could hear as he stood in the other doorway, was almost as detestable as that of Dobbs Broughton in his drunkenness. Crosbie did not doubt that this was either Burton or Bangles, and that the man standing inside was either Bangles or Burton. He could not bring himself to accost these men and tell them of his necessities, and propose to them that they should relieve him. In spite of what Musselboro had just said to him, he could not believe it possible that he should succeed, were he to do so without some introduction. So he left Hook Court and went out into the

lane, hearing as he went the loud voice of the man with the turned-up hat and the chain.

But what was he to do? At the outset of his pecuniary troubles, when he first found it necessary to litigate some question with the De Courcy people, and withstand the web which Mortimer Gazebee wove so assiduously, his own attorney had introduced him to Dobbs Broughton, and the assistance which he had needed had come to him, at any rate, without trouble. He did not especially like Mr. Broughton; and when Mr. Broughton first invited him to come and eat a little bit of dinner, he had told himself with painful remorse that in his early days he had been accustomed to eat his little bits of dinner with people of a different kind. But there had been nothing really painful in this. Since his marriage with a daughter of the De Courcys, —by which marriage he had intended to climb to the highest pinnacle of social eating and drinking,—he had gradually found himself to be falling in the scale of such matters, and could bring himself to dine with a Dobbs Broughton without any violent pain. But now he had fallen so low that Dobbs Broughton had insulted him, and he was in such distress that he did not know where to turn for ten pounds. Mr. Gazebee had beaten him at litigation, and his own lawyer had advised him that it would be foolish to try the matter further. In his marriage with the noble daughter of the De Courcys he had allowed the framers of the De Courcy settlement to tie him up in such a way that now, even when chance had done so much for him in freeing him from his wife, he was still bound to the De Courcy faction. Money had been paid away,—on his behalf, as alleged by Mr. Gazebee,—like running water; money for furniture, money for the lease of a house, money when he had been separated from his wife, money while she was living abroad. It had seemed to him that he had been made to pay for the entire support of the female moiety of the De Courcy family which had settled itself at Baden-Baden, from the day, and in some respects from before the day, on

which his wife had joined that moiety. He had done all in his power to struggle against these payments, but every such struggle had only cost him more money. Mr. Gazebee had written to him the civilest notes; but every note seemed to cost him money,—every word of each note seemed to find its way into some bill. His wife had died and her body had been brought back, with all the pomp befitting the body of an earl's daughter, that it might be laid with the old De Courcy dust,—at his expense. The embalming of her dear remains had cost a wondrous sum, and was a terrible blow upon him. All these items were showered upon him by Mr. Gazebee with the most courteously worded demands for settlement as soon as convenient. And then, when he applied that Lady Alexandrina's small fortune should be made over to him,—according to a certain agreement under which he had made over all his possessions to his wife, should she have survived him,—Mr. Gazebee expressed a mild opinion that he was wrong in his law, and blandly recommended an amicable lawsuit. The amicable lawsuit was carried on. His own lawyer seemed to throw him over. Mr. Gazebee was successful in everything. No money came to him. Money was demanded from him on old scores and on new scores,—and all that he received to console him for what he had lost was a mourning ring with his wife's hair,—for which, with sundry other mourning rings, he had to pay,—and an introduction to Mr. Dobbs Broughton. To Mr. Dobbs Broughton he owed five hundred pounds; and as regarded a bill for the one-half of that sum which was due to-morrow, Mr. Dobbs Broughton had refused to grant him renewal for a single month!

I know no more uncomfortable walking than that which falls to the lot of men who go into the City to look for money, and who find none. Of all the lost steps trodden by men, surely the steps lost after that fashion are the most melancholy. It is not only that they are so vain, but that they are accompanied by so killing a sense of shame! To

wait about in dingy rooms, which look on to bare walls, and areapproached through some Hook Court; or to keep appointments at a low coffee-house, to which trystings the money-lender will not trouble himself to come unless it pleases him; to be civil, almost suppliant, to a cunning knave whom the borrower loathes; to be refused thrice, and then cheated with his eyes open on the fourth attempt; to submit himself to vulgarity of the foulest kind, and to have to seem to like it; to be badgered, reviled, and at last accused of want of honesty by the most fraudulent of mankind; and at the same time to be clearly conscious of the ruin that is coming,—this is the fate of him who goes into the city to find money, not knowing where it is to be found!

Crosbie went along the lane into Lombard Street, and then he stood still for a moment to think. Though he knew a good deal of affairs in general, he did not quite know what would happen to him if his bill should be dishonoured. That somebody would bring it to him noted, and require him instantly to put his hand into his pocket and bring out the amount of the bill, plus the amount of certain expenses, he thought that he did know. And he knew that were he in trade he would become a bankrupt; and he was well aware that such an occurrence would prove him to be insolvent. But he did not know what his creditors would immediately have the power of doing. That the fact of the bill having been dishonoured would reach the Board under which he served,—and, therefore, also the fact that he had had recourse to such bill transactions,—this alone was enough to fill him with dismay. In early life he had carried his head so high, he had been so much more than a mere Government clerk, that the idea of the coming disgrace almost killed him. Would it not be well that he should put an end to himself, and thus escape? What was there in the world now for which it was worth his while to live? Lily, whom he had once gained, and by that gain had placed himself high in all hopes of happiness and riches,—whom he had then thrown away from him, and who had again

seemed to be almost within his reach,—Lily had so refused him that he knew not how to approach her with a further prayer. And, had she not refused him, how could he have told her of his load of debt? As he stood at the corner where the lane runs into Lombard Street, he came for a while to think almost more of Lily than of his rejected bill. Then, as he thought of both his misfortunes together, he asked himself whether a pistol would not conveniently put an end to them together.

At that moment a loud, harsh voice greeted his ear. "Hallo, Crosbie, what brings you so far east? One does not often see you in the City." It was the voice of Sir Raffle Buffle, which in former days had been very odious to Crosbie's ears;—for Sir Raffle Buffle had once been the presiding genius of the office to which Crosbie still belonged.

"No, indeed, not very often," said Crosbie, smiling. Who can tell, who has not felt it, the pain that goes to the forcing of such smiles? But Sir Raffle was not an acutely observant person, and did not see that anything was wrong.

"I suppose you're doing a little business?" said Sir Raffle. "If a man has kept a trifle of money by him, this certainly is the time for turning it. You have always been wide awake about such things."

"No, indeed," said Crosbie. If he could only make up his mind that he would shoot himself, would it not be a pleasant thing to inflict some condign punishment on this odious man before he left the world? But Crosbie knew that he was not going to shoot himself, and he knew also that he had no power of inflicting condign punishment on Sir Raffle Buffle. He could only hate the man, and curse him inwardly.

"Ah, ha!" said Sir Raffle. "You wouldn't be here unless you knew where a good thing is to be picked up. But I must be off. I'm on the Rocky Mountain Canal Company Directory. I'm not above taking my two guineas a day. Good-by, my boy. Remember me to old Optimist." And

so Sir Raffle passed on, leaving Crosbie still standing at the corner of the lane.

What was he to do? This interruption had at least seemed to drive Lily from his mind, and to send his ideas back to the consideration of his pecuniary difficulties. He thought of his own bank, a West-End establishment at which he was personally known to many of the clerks, and where he had been heretofore treated with great consideration. But of late his balances had been very low, and more than once he had been reminded that he had overdrawn his account. He knew well that the distinguished firm of Bounce, Bounce, and Bounce would not cash a bill for him or lend him money without security. He did not even dare to ask them to do so.

On a sudden he jumped into a cab, and was driven back to his office. A thought had come upon him. He would throw himself upon the kindness of a friend there. Hitherto he had contrived to hold his head so high above the clerks below him, so high before the Commissioners who were above him, that none there suspected him to be a man in difficulty. It not seldom happens that a man's character stands too high for his interest,—so high that it cannot be maintained, and so high that any fall will be dangerous. And so it was with Crosbie and his character at the General Committee Office. The man to whom he was now thinking of applying as his friend, was a certain Mr. Butterwell, who had been his predecessor in the secretary's chair, and who now filled the less onerous but more dignified position of a Commissioner. Mr. Crosbie had somewhat despised Mr. Butterwell, and had of late years not been averse to showing that he did so. He had snubbed Mr. Butterwell, and Mr. Butterwell, driven to his wits' end, had tried a fall or two with him. In all these struggles Crosbie had had the best of it, and Butterwell had gone to the wall. Nevertheless, for the sake of official decency, and from certain wise remembrances of the sources of official comfort and official discomfort, Mr. Butterwell had always maintained a show

of outward friendship with the secretary. They smiled and were gracious, called each other Butterwell and Crosbie, and abstained from all cat-and-dog absurdities. Nevertheless, it was the frequently expressed opinion of every clerk in the office that Mr. Butterwell hated Mr. Crosbie like poison. This was the man to whom Crosbie suddenly made up his mind that he would have recourse.

As he was driven back to his office he resolved that he would make a plunge at once at the difficulty. He knew that Butterwell was fairly rich, and he knew also that he was good-natured,—with that sort of sleepy good-nature which is not active for philanthropic purposes, but which dislikes to incur the pain of refusing. And then Mr. Butterwell was nervous, and if the thing was managed well, he might be cheated out of an assent, before time had been given him in which to pluck up courage for refusing. But Crosbie doubted his own courage also,—fearing that if he gave himself time for hesitation he would hesitate, and that, hesitating, he would feel the terrible disgrace of the thing and not do it. So, without going to his own desk, or ridding himself of his hat, he went at once to Butterwell's room. When he opened the door, he found Mr. Butterwell alone, reading The Times. "Butterwell," said he, beginning to speak before he had even closed the door, "I have come to you in great distress. I wonder whether you can help me; I want you to lend me five hundred pounds? It must be for not less than three months."

Mr. Butterwell dropped the paper from his hands, and stared at the secretary over his spectacles.

END OF VOLUME THE FIRST, PART TWO

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